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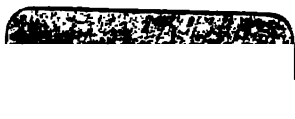
Harvard Divinity School



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5



THE UNKNOWN LIFE
OF
JESUS CHRIST

BY THE DISCOVERER OF THE MANUSCRIPT,


^R
NICOLAS NOTOVITCH.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH BY

ALEXINA LORANGER.

CHICAGO AND NEW YORK:
RAND, McNALLY & COMPANY, PUBLISHERS.

1894.



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Life of Christ.

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

PREFACE,	7
A JOURNEY TO THIBET,	13
THE LADAK,	62
A FEAST IN A GONPA,	76
THE LIFE OF SAINT ISSA,	98
EPITOME,	147
EXPLANATORY NOTES,	184

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PREFACE.

AFTER the close of the Turko-Russian War (1877-1878) I undertook a series of extended journeys through the Orient. Having visited all points of interest in the Balkan Peninsula, I crossed the Caucasian Mountains into Central Asia and Persia, and finally, in 1887, made an excursion into India, the most admired country of the dreams of my childhood.

The first object of this journey was to study the customs and habits of the inhabitants of India amid their own surroundings, as well as the grand, mysterious archæology and the colossal, majestic nature of the country. Wandering without any settled course from one locality to another, I at last came to mountainous Afghanistan, whence I reached India through the picturesque passes of Bolan and Guernat. I then followed the Indus to Rawal-Pindi, traveled through the Punjab—the country of five rivers—visited the golden temple of Amritsir, the tomb of Randjid Singh, king of the Punjab, near Lahore, and proceeded toward Kashmir, the “vale of eternal happiness.” There I began my peregrinations as fancy or curiosity

guided or dictated, until I reached the Ladak, where I intended to make a somewhat lengthy stay before returning to Russia through Eastern Turkestan and Karakorum.

In the course of one of my visits to a Buddhist convent, I learned from the chief Lama that there existed very ancient memoirs, treating of the life of Christ and of the nations of the Occident, in the archives of Lassa, and that a few of the larger monasteries possessed copies and translations of these precious chronicles.

There being little probability of my early return to this country, I resolved to delay my departure for Europe, and verify these assertions by seeing some of these copies, even though I were obliged to invade every convent as far as Lassa—a journey far less perilous and difficult to accomplish than we are usually led to believe. Besides this, I was now so well accustomed to the dangers encountered by the traveler in those regions that they no longer possessed any terrors for me.

During my sojourn in Leh, the capital of Ladak, I visited Himis, a large convent in the outskirts of the city, where I was informed by the Lama that the monastic libraries contained a few copies of the manuscript in question.

That I might not arouse the suspicions of the authorities in regard to the object of my visit to the convent, and raise no obstacles to a subsequent journey into Thibet—as a Russian—on my return to Leh I announced my immediate departure for India, and again left the capital of Ladak.

An unfortunate accident, whereby my leg was fractured, furnished me with a totally unexpected pretext to enter the monastery, where I received excellent care and nursing; and I took advantage of my short stay among these monks to obtain the privilege of seeing the manuscripts relating to Christ. With the aid of my interpreter, who translated from the Thibetan tongue, I carefully transcribed the verses as they were read by the Lama.

Entertaining no doubt of the authenticity of this narrative, written with the utmost precision by Brahmin historians and Buddhists of India and Nepal, my intention was to publish the translation on my return to Europe. With this object in view, I addressed myself to several well-known ecclesiastics, requesting them to revise my notes and tell me what they thought of the matter.

Monseigneur Platon, the celebrated archbishop of Kiew, believed my discovery to be of great importance; but he earnestly tried to dissuade me from giving

the memoirs publicity, declaring it would be against my own interests to do so.

Why? This the venerable prelate refused to explain. Our conversation, however, having taken place in Russia, where censorship would have placed its veto on a work of this kind, I determined to wait.

A year later I chanced to be in Rome. Here I submitted the manuscript to a cardinal standing high in the estimation of the Holy Father.

"Why should you print this?" he said, didactically; "nobody will attach much importance to it, and you will create numberless enemies thereby. You are still young, however. If you need money, I can obtain some compensation for these notes, enough to remunerate you for your loss of time and expenditure." Naturally enough, I refused the offer.

In Paris I laid my project before Cardinal Rotelli, whom I had met in Constantinople. He also opposed the publication of my work, under pretext that it would be premature. "The church," he added, "suffers too deeply from this new current of atheistic ideas; and you would only furnish new food to the calumniators and detractors of the evangelical doctrine. I tell you this in the interest of all Christian churches."

I then called on M. Jules Simon, who found my communication most interesting, and advised me to

consult M. Renan in regard to the best means of publishing these memoirs.

The very next day I found myself seated in the study of the great philosopher. At the end of the interview M. Renan proposed that I should intrust him with the memoirs in question, that he might make a report on them to the Academy. This proposition, as the reader will understand, was most seductive and flattering; yet I took away the work with me, saying I wished to revise it once more—the fact being that I feared if I accepted this association I would only receive the bare honor of discovering the chronicles, while the illustrious author of the “Life of Jesus” would reap the glory of the publication and of the commentaries. Believing myself sufficiently prepared to publish the narrative by adding my own notes, I finally declined the courteous offer made to me. That I might not, however, wound the feelings of the great master, whom I deeply respected, I resolved to await his death, which could not be far off, judging from his feebleness. Soon after the death of M. Renan, I wrote to M. Jules Simon, and again sought his advice. His reply was that I should judge for myself of the expediency of giving publicity to the memoirs.

I therefore prepared my notes, and now publish them, reserving the right to attest the authenticity of

these chronicles. In my commentaries I carefully develop the arguments which prove the good faith and sincerity of the Buddhist compilers. It only remains for me to add that before criticising my work scientific societies can, without much expense, organize an expedition whose mission it will be to study these manuscripts in the locality in which they are to be found, and thus verify their historical value.

NICOLAS NOTOVITCH.

P. S.—In the course of my travels I took many curious photographs, but when I came to examine the negatives on my return to India I was dismayed to find that they were absolutely destroyed.

THE UNKNOWN LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST.

A JOURNEY TO THIBET.

DURING my sojourn in India, I found many opportunities to mingle and converse with the Buddhists; and so thoroughly was my curiosity excited by their accounts of Thibet that I resolved to immediately undertake a journey to that almost unknown country. With this view, I chose a route extending through Kashmir, a country I had often desired to explore.

On October 14, 1887, I took my place in the compartment of a railway train literally filled with soldiers, and traveled from Lahore to Rawal-Pindi, reaching the latter place at noon the following day. Having recovered from the fatigues of the journey and visited the city, which, owing to its permanent garrison, presents the appearance of a war camp, I turned my attention to the purchase of such articles as are necessary on a journey where railways are unknown, and horses furnish the only means of conveyance. With the aid of my negro servant, Pondichery, I packed

my luggage, procured a tonga (a two-wheeled vehicle drawn by a pair of horses), and, having made myself as comfortable as circumstances would permit on the rear seat, began my journey over the picturesque route leading to Kashmir.

Our tonga was soon rolling rapidly along the magnificent road, though no little dexterity was required in going through a large caravan of soldiers belonging to a detachment traveling from the camp into the city, with their cumbersome luggage loaded on the backs of camels. Soon we came to the end of the Punjab Valley, and turning into a sinuous path began to climb the Outer Himalayan Range. The acclivity became more and more abrupt as we ascended, while the magnificent panorama stretching away beneath our feet grew less and less distinct. The last rays of the setting sun were gilding the summit of the mountains as our tonga gaily emerged from the winding road on the crest of the mountain, below which nestles the pretty little town of Murree, a summer resort much in favor with the families of English officials, on account of its shade and comparative coolness.

The journey from Murree to Serinagur may be accomplished by tonga; but at the approach of winter, when all Europeans desert Kashmir, the tonga service is suspended. Having undertaken

my journey near the end of the warm season, I greatly astonished the English tourists whom I met on their way back to India; but their efforts to discover the object of my journey remained fruitless.

The roadway not being entirely constructed yet, I was obliged, not without considerable difficulty, however, to hire saddle-horses. Night had already fallen when we started on our descent from Murree, which stands at an altitude of five thousand feet. The road was dark, and deeply rutted by recent rains, and the journey was anything but cheerful, as the horses faithfully plodded along, guided by instinct rather than sight. As night deepened, rain began to fall in torrents; and the shadows cast by the century oaks surrounding us shrouded us in impenetrable darkness. Fearing that we might stray apart and get lost, we kept up a continual shouting as we rode on. Above us we knew, though we could not pierce the thick gloom, that gigantic masses of rock overhung the path, while to the left a rushing torrent thundered down over a precipice hidden by the trees.

We had waded through the thick mud for more than two hours, chilled to the bones by the icy rain, when the distant light of a fire at last appeared to revive our strength. But, alas! how



very deceiving such lights prove in the wilderness of the mountain! One moment it seems almost within reach of your hand, but suddenly disappears, to reappear, sometimes at your left, then at your right, sometimes above, then below you, as if it took pleasure in tantalizing the weary traveler. Meanwhile, the road makes a thousand turns, zigzagging in every direction, while the motionless fire seems animated with perpetual motion, the obscurity being so dense that we fail to see the continual changes in the direction of the road.

I had regretfully abandoned all hope of ever reaching this so earnestly longed-for fire, when it suddenly reappeared so close to us that the horses involuntarily stopped short.

Here I must pause to express my gratitude and offer my sincere thanks to the English for their kind thoughtfulness in erecting along the roads a number of small bungalows, in which the weary traveler is glad to find shelter and rest. These isolated inns possess little comfort, it is true, but the exhausted pilgrim does not even notice the lack of luxuries, so delighted is he to find a clean dry room in which to stretch his tired limbs.

The Hindoos evidently did not expect travelers at that advanced hour of the night and at that

season, for they had carried away the keys, and we were compelled to force open the door of the bungalow.

I immediately threw myself on the bed, which consisted of one pillow and a piece of wet carpet, and was soon buried in slumber. At dawn, after partaking of tea and a little food, we resumed our way under a scorching sun. Now and then we passed through a village, standing in some magnificent defile, or along the winding path that penetrated into the very bosom of the mountains, until we finally reached the Jhelum, whose sparkling waters flow gracefully over a rocky bed, and whose course is confined within a picturesque gorge that sometimes rises almost to the azure vault of the Himalayan heavens—heavens wonderfully pure and serene in this region.

At noon we reached a hamlet called Tongua, where the houses are strung along the river-bank and appear like so many boxes with façade openings. Cosmetics and all kinds of merchandise are retailed. The place literally swarms with Hindoos, each bearing on his brow the diversely colored mark of his particular caste. Here, too, is seen the dignified Kashmirian, clad in a long white tunic and an equally snowy turban.

In consideration of a good round sum of money,

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I procured the loan of a Hindoo cabriolet from a Kashmirian. This equipage is so constructed that one must sit with crossed legs, or Turkish fashion, while the seat is so small that it will barely accommodate two persons. The absence of a back, moreover, renders this mode of locomotion extremely dangerous. Such was my anxiety to reach the end of my journey, however, that I unhesitatingly climbed on this circular table—so awkwardly perched on two wheels and drawn by a single horse—rather than delay my departure one unnecessary day.

But I had barely gone a half-kilometer when I seriously began to regret my saddle-horse, so fatiguing and difficult did I find it to keep my legs crossed and maintain my equilibrium. Unfortunately, it was too late to turn back.

Night had fallen when I arrived at Horis, exhausted with fatigue and bruised by the jolting, my limbs feeling as though they were the central point of attack from millions of ants, and too utterly wretched to enjoy the picturesque scenery opening before our eyes as we advanced along the Jhelum, on the banks of which arises a chain of wooded mountains on one side, while the other is bordered by a rocky precipice.

At Horis I met a caravan of pilgrims on their way from Mecca. Imagining that I was a physi-

cian, and hearing of my hurry to reach the Ladak, they begged me to join them, which I promised to do after reaching Serinagur.

I left the village on horseback at dawn, after a night spent seated upright on my bed, holding a lighted torch in my hand, and not daring to close my eyes, lest I should be stung by the myriads of scorpions and centipedes which infested the bungalows. Though heartily ashamed of the terror inspired in me by those insects, I could not sufficiently overcome it to compose myself to sleep.

Who can point out the dividing-line between courage and cowardice? Who can say where the one begins and the other ends?

I make no boast of bravery, but I am not a coward. And yet, the insurmountable fear aroused in me by that species of small animals totally banished sleep from my eyes in spite of my extreme fatigue.

As our horses slowly advanced through the flat valley, with the sun beaming warmly on us from over the mountains, I gradually fell asleep in the saddle. I was suddenly aroused by a chilly breeze some time later, and found that we were ascending a mountain-path in the midst of a vast forest, which sometimes opened to give us a glimpse of an impetuous torrent, with pictur-

esque surroundings, then quickly closed again, concealing from our view the mountains, the sky, the entire country in fact, but giving us instead the songs of myriads of its bright-plumaged birds.

We emerged from the forest at about noon, descended into a small hamlet on the river-bank, and having refreshed ourselves with a cold lunch, resumed the journey. As we passed the market-place I stopped with the intention of purchasing a glass of warm milk from a Hindoo who was squatting beside a large pail of boiling milk; but what was my surprise when he proposed that I should take the pail with its contents, declaring that I had defiled the liquid.

"I only want a glass of milk, not the pail," I explained.

"According to our laws," replied the Hindoo, "if any one not belonging to our caste gazes fixedly at any object, or article of food, we must throw away the one and wash the other. You have defiled my milk, O Sahib, and no one will drink it; for not only did you gaze at it, but you also pointed your finger in its direction."

Having long examined his merchandise to make sure it was real milk, as well as pointed out from which side of the pail I desired to have it poured, I stood convicted; and as I always respect the

laws and customs of strange nations, I readily gave him a rupee, the full price of the spilt milk, although I had taken but one glass. The incident taught me a lesson, however, and I was never again guilty of fixing my eyes on the food of a Hindoo.

There is no religious doctrine more encumbered with ceremonies, laws, and commentaries than Brahminism. While each religion possesses but one Bible, one gospel, or one Koran, from which the Hebrews, the Christians, and the Mohammedans borrow their faith, the Brahmin Hindoos possess so great a number of commentaries in folio that the most learned Brahmin that ever existed scarcely had time to reach the tenth.

Leaving aside the four books of the Vedas, the Pouranas, written in Sanscrit, and composed of eighteen volumes, containing four hundred thousand stanzas, which treat of law, theology, medicine, of the creation, the destruction and regeneration of the world, etc.; the vast Chasttras, which treat of mathematics, grammar, etc.; the Oupovedas, Oupanichadas, Onpopouranas, which serve as explanation to the Pouranas, and a host of other commentaries in many volumes, there still remain the twelve large books containing the laws of Manou, grandson of Brahma. These books not only relate to penal

stars began to peep from the sky above. We alighted from our horses and groped our way along the mountain-sides, fearing every moment to be dashed into the yawning precipice at our feet.

At an advanced hour of the night we crossed a bridge and climbed up a steep incline leading to the Ouri bungalow, which stands in complete isolation on those heights. The following day we traversed a charming region; still skirting the river-bank, we came to a sharp bend, where we found the ruins of a Saic fortress, seemingly grieving over the ashes of its glorious past. In a small valley, almost concealed in the midst of the surrounding mountains, we found a bungalow, with its door invitingly opened in welcome; and not far away we suddenly came into the camp of a cavalry regiment belonging to the army of the Maharaja of Kashmir.

On learning that I was a Russian, the officers courteously invited me to breakfast with them. It was on this occasion that I had the pleasure of forming the acquaintance of Colonel Brown, who was the first to compile a dictionary of the Afghan-Pouchtou tongue.

Being extremely anxious to reach Serinagur as soon as possible, I at once resumed my journey, through a most picturesque region lying at the

foot of the mountains. To my eyes, so wearied by the monotony of the preceding scenery, the inhabited valley that now stretched before us, with its two-story buildings, its gardens, and cultivated fields, came as a positive relief. At a short distance, hidden by a range of high hills, which we crossed toward evening, begins the celebrated "Vale of Kashmir."

How can I describe the magnificent scenery that opened before my eyes as I reached the brow of the last hill that separates the "Vale of Kashmir" from the mountainous country I had just traversed! A dazzling picture held me spell-bound!

The "Vale of Kashmir," which is everywhere populated, and whose limits are lost in the horizon, is walled in by the high Himalaya Mountains. At the rising and setting of the sun the zone of eternal snows appears like a silver ring encircling this rich, beautiful plateau, which is intersected by many fine roads and numberless sparkling rivers.

The gardens, the hillocks, and the lake, with its many islands covered with buildings of presumptuous style, all contribute to make the traveler believe he has been suddenly transported into another world. He is strongly inclined to tarry here forever, thinking he must have found the

paradise, or enchanted land, of his nursery days.

The veil of night soon spread over the valley, merging mountains, gardens, and lakes into one dark mass, with a few distant lights glimmering here and there like stars. I descended the valley in the direction of the Jhelum, which has cut its way through a narrow defile in the mountains to unite its waters with those of the River Indus.

A legend exists in which it is claimed that the valley was once an inland sea, the waters of which forced a passage through the environing prison-walls, leaving no trace but a few small ponds and the Jhelum River, which empties into the Indus. Its banks are almost hidden by the numerous long, narrow boats which serve as shelter for the families of the owners the year round.

From this point, Serinagur may be reached in one day on horseback, but the journey by boat consumes a day and a half. I nevertheless chose to travel by water; and having procured a boat, after much haggling about prices with the proprietor, I installed myself at its prow on a piece of carpet, protected by a sort of awning.

We left at midnight, the boat gliding toward Serinagur. At the other extremity of the bark a Hindoo was quietly preparing me a cup of tea, while I fell into a dreamless sleep, happy in the

thought that I was advancing on my journey without further exertion and fatigue.

I was aroused by the warm caresses of the rising sun, and opened my eyes on a glimpse of nature that charmed me into ecstasies: a bank of velvety verdure; the distant outlines of snow-capped peaks; pretty villages, nestling at the foot of the mountain; a crystalline sheet of water; a pure, balmy atmosphere, which I breathed with avidity; the warbling of an infinity of birds; a sky of transcendent purity; behind me the swish of the water under the impulsion of a rounded oar dexterously handled by a beautiful woman, with wonderful eyes and cheeks delicately bronzed by the sun. All these cast a spell upon me, and I totally forgot the reason of my presence there. In that one moment I ceased to long for the end of my journey; and yet, what endless privations and perils there still remained to face and endure! The boat glided swiftly down the stream, the magnificent scenery unceasingly unfolding before my eyes to melt away beyond the confines of the horizon, where it seemingly became part of the mountains already passed; then, far away, in the direction toward which we were drifting, another glorious picture seemed to unroll from the mountain-side, a picture that grew more and more vivid as we were carried onward.

Twilight was now gathering fast about us, and still I did not weary of the contemplation of this glorious bit of nature, which awakened in my heart the sweetest recollections of my youth and childhood. How beautiful indeed were those days, now forever gone!

As we neared Serinagur we saw more and more of those pretty villages buried in verdure.

As the boat came to a stop a number of people flocked to the river-bank, the men wearing turbans, the women in small caps, and long chemises reaching to the ground, and the children in a state of nudity that strongly reminded us of the garments in vogue with our first parents.

A long row of boats and floating houses, in which dwell entire families, lines the stream at the entrance of the city. As we quietly glided between these wooden huts the last rays of the setting sun were gilding the snow-covered summits of the distant mountains.

Life here seems to cease with the setting of the sun. Thousands of gaily colored dungas and banglas (boats), adorned with palanquins, were moored to the quay, while Kashmirians of both sexes, attired in the primitive costume of Adam and Eve, were performing their twilight ablutions absolutely unrestrained by the presence of others; for the importance of the rite they were

executing was far greater to them than that of all human prejudices.

On the morning of October 20th I opened my eyes in a clean cozy room overlooking the river, which sparkled and glistened beneath the glorious sun of Kashmir. My object not being to describe my voyage in these pages, I will say nothing of the valleys, the paradise of lilacs; of the enchanted islands, the many historical palaces, the picturesque pagodas, so redolent of mystery; the coquettish villages, seemingly lost in vast gardens; or of the majestic peaks of the giants of the Himalaya, rising on all sides and buried beneath a white shroud of eternal snow. I shall merely note the preparations made in view of a new journey in the direction of Thibet. I spent six days in Serinagur, making long excursions into its beautiful surrounding country, examining the numerous ruins that still stand as evidence of the ancient prosperity of that region, and studying the curious customs of the land.

The Kashmir, as well as the other provinces attached to it, such as the Baltistan, the Ladak, etc., are vassals of England. They formerly made part of the possessions of the "Lion of Punjab," Randjid Sing; but at his death English troops invaded Lahore, the capital of the

Punjab, separated Kashmir from the rest of the empire, and under pretense of hereditary possession and in consideration of one hundred and sixty millions of francs, ceded it to Goubab-Sing, a relation of the dead sovereign, on whom was conferred the title of Maharaja. At the time of my voyage, the reigning Maharaja was Pertab-Sing, grandson of Goubab, who resides in Jam-oee, on the southern slope of the Himalayas.

The celebrated "Vale of Kashmir," which is eighty-five miles in length and twenty-five miles in breadth, enjoyed its days of true glory and prosperity during the reign of the Great Mogul, whose court gathered there to enjoy the rustic pleasures of the country in the cottages still standing on the small islands of the lake.

A large number of the Maharajas of Hindoostan formerly spent the summer months here also, and took part in the sumptuous round of festivities given by the Great Mogul; but time has wrought a woful change, and the "happy valley" is now nothing more than a place of resort for mendicants. Weeds and the moldiness from all sorts of noxious plants have covered the limpid water of the lake, the wild juniper bush has choked all vegetation on the islands, palaces and pavilions have nothing left but the remembrance of their dead grandeur, dust

and rank growths overspread the ruins like a mantle. The surrounding mountains, with their white pinnacles, seem mournfully sad and patiently waiting for better days to burst forth in all their immortal beauty. The inhabitants, hitherto intellectual, handsome, and cleanly, are tending toward a state of idiocy; being filthy and lazy, and governed by the lash instead of the sword. The Kashmirians have so frequently been exposed to pillage and invasion, and have known so many masters, that they have become indifferent to everything; spending their time near their huts or on the river bank gossiping, or quietly making their celebrated shawls and cutting designs on gold or silver. The women are extremely melancholy, and bear an expression of inconceivable sadness on their features. Misery and squalor reign everywhere. The fine men and beautiful women of Kashmir are filthy and ragged beyond conception; and the dress of both sexes, in winter and summer alike, consists only of a long heavy gown, with wide flowing sleeves, resembling nothing more than a shirt. This garment is removed only when completely worn out, and never — under any consideration — is it washed, giving the white turbans of the male population a dazzling whiteness in contrast with their stained, greasy gowns.

A deep sadness overcomes the traveler as he notes the contrast between this rich, opulent country and its ragged inhabitants.

Serinagur (the city of the sun), or Cashmere as it is sometimes called from the name of the country, is the capital and is situated on the Jhelum, along the bank of which it extends southward over a distance of five kilometers.

The two-story houses, which shelter a population of one hundred thousand inhabitants, are constructed of wood, and stand in close proximity to the water. The town itself is not more than two kilometers in breadth, and everybody lives on the river whose banks are united by ten or twelve bridges. Steps lead from every house to the waters of the Jhelum, where nearly the entire day is spent in ablutions, bathing, and washing utensils—the latter consisting merely of two or three brass jugs. A portion of the inhabitants practice the Mohammedan religion, while two-thirds are Brahmans; there are also a few Buddhists, though the number is extremely limited.

The time had now arrived to begin my preparations for a journey into the unknown. Having purchased different kinds of preserves, a few casks of wine, and many other things found indispensable in the course of a journey through a country as sparsely populated as Thibet, I

packed the whole in boxes, hired ten carriers and one interpreter, bought myself a horse, and fixed the date of departure for October 27th. To enliven the road I procured from a Frenchman, Monsiur Peicheau, superintendent of the Maharaja's vineyard, a large dog which had already accompanied my friends Bonvalot, Capus, and Pepin, the well-known explorers through the Pamir. Wishing to shorten the journey by two days, I started the carriers at dawn from the other side of the lake, while I crossed by boat, rejoining the caravan and my horse at the foot of the chain of mountains that separated the Serinagur Valley from the Gorge of the Sindh.

Never shall I forget the tortures we endured in climbing, almost on all fours, to the summit of a peak three thousand feet high. The carriers were exhausted and out of breath, and I trembled lest one of them might roll down the declivity at any moment with his burden, while my heart fairly ached at sight of my poor dog, Pamir, who stumbled along with his tongue lolling out, whining and falling by the way at every few steps. I forgot my own fatigue to caress and encourage the poor animal, who looked at me piteously, bravely went on a few steps more, and again fell exhausted.

Night had fallen when we reached the pinnacle

of the mountain, where we greedily flung ourselves on the snow to quench our thirst. Having taken a brief rest, we began the descent through a dense pine forest, hoping to gain the village of Haïena at the foot of the defile before the appearance of beasts of prey.

A straight well-kept road leads from Serinagur to Haïena, going directly north to Ganderbal, where it turns abruptly to the east, after having skirted the Sindh and traversed a country of luxurious vegetation to Kangan, which is six miles from Haïena; toward which place I was journeying by a more direct route through a pass three thousand feet high, but which saved both time and distance.

My first steps into the unknown were marked by an incident that left a most horrible impression upon me. The defile of the Sindh, which is sixty miles long, is particularly celebrated for its inhospitable inhabitants, among which panthers, tigers, leopards, black bears, wolves, and jackals abound. The snow having unfortunately just spread its white mantle over the summits of the chain, these redoubtable foes of man had been forced to seek shelter in their lairs somewhat lower down.

We were silently following the narrow winding path through the pines and centenary birch trees,

the grinding sound of our footsteps alone breaking the deep monotonous hush of the night, when suddenly, in our very midst as it seemed, a prolonged howl awoke the echoes of the forest. Our little band stopped short and listened.

"A panther!" gasped my servant, who stood trembling by my side.

The small caravan of twelve men stood with bated breath, paralyzed with fear. I now remembered that at our last resting place I had entrusted my revolver to one of the carriers and given my rifle to another; the thought filled me with poignant regret and alarm, and I inquired in a low tone for one of these men. A more terrible cry rang through the night at this moment, then a crash like the fall of a heavy body was heard, succeeded by a shriek of agony that froze the blood in our veins. We guessed rather than saw the horrible struggle going on between the unfortunate man and the famished beast of prey.

"Sahib, take the gun," whispered a voice near me.

I feverishly clutched the Winchester. But, alas, I could not see two feet from me. Another cry, followed by a stifled roar, guided me; and I crept in its direction, equally divided between my desire to kill a panther and the horrible dread of being flayed alive. Nobody dared to move; and

it was not until fully five minutes had elapsed that one of the men thought of lighting a match.

Remembering the dread of fire usually evinced by wild beasts, I then caught up a few handfuls of brush-wood and set flame to it.

Not more than ten feet from us, we then saw the unfortunate victim stretched on the ground, his limbs completely torn away by the claws of a beautiful panther which still crouched unmoved with a piece of flesh between its jaws. Near by lay a cask of wine completely crushed.

Scarcely had I shouldered my gun, however, when the beast of prey sprang to its feet, dropped its bleeding morsel of food and turned as if ready to leap upon me; then with a blood-curdling howl, it suddenly veered about and disappeared in the thicket.

My coolies, who all this time had been prostrated to the ground by terror, now gradually recovered from their fright and prepared to go on. Having gathered a bunch of dry underbrush, placed some matches at hand, and cocked our guns, we hurried toward Haïena, leaving the remains of the unfortunate Hindoo behind us in fear of sharing the same fate.

One hour later, we came out of the forest into the open country. I immediately had my tent put up under a leafy plane-tree and an enormous

fire built; this being the only means of protection that could be used against the wild beasts whose howls came from every direction about us freezing the blood in our veins. Meanwhile my dog crouched trembling at my feet; but, once in the tent, he quickly regained his courage and spent the rest of the night in incessant barking.

That night was a terrible one to me, as I sat upright with my rifle clutched tightly in my hand, listening to the horrible howling and roaring that filled the air with deafening echoes. A few panthers approached our camp in response to Pamir's bark, but none dared to come within shooting distance.

I had left Serinagur at the head of eleven carriers, of whom four carried as many casks of wine, four more the clothes needed for the journey, another my weapons, and still another different utensils, while a last served as courier and guide, as he frequently went forward to reconnoiter. The latter's name was Chicari, which signifies, "he who accompanies the hunter and picks up the game." But owing to his cowardice and utter ignorance of the country, I dismissed him, with some of the other men the next morning, retaining only four carriers with me. I quickly replaced them with horses, and slowly proceeded toward the village of Gounde.

What beautiful nature unfolds itself in the gorge of the Sindh, and how beloved it is by the hunter. Besides the larger beasts of prey, there are also found deer, moufflon, and an immense variety of birds, among which may be mentioned the golden, the red, and the snow-white pheasant, large partridges, and immense eagles.

The villages along the Sindh are not remarkable for their dimensions, most of them consisting of but ten to twenty wretched huts, occupied by ragged families that bear the stamp of poverty. The domestic animals all belong to an exceedingly small species.

Crossing the stream at Sambal I stopped near the Gounde village for a relay of horses. In some of the small places, I was absolutely refused a change of horses until I made use of my whip, a proceeding which at once imposed respect and obedience. Money also proved a most powerful agent in attaining this object, inspiring a servile obedience and a desire to execute my orders that was truly astonishing.

Gold and the lash are the real sovereigns of the Orient; without them the Great Mogul himself could have had no preponderance.

Meanwhile, night was gathering fast and I was anxious to cross the defile that separates the villages of Gogangan and Sonamarg, the road

being in a horrible condition and infested with wild beasts that come to the very doors of the dwelling houses in search of prey under cover of night. The spot is fertile and beautiful, yet few dare make it their home on account of the frequent visits of the panther among the domestic animals.

At the extremity of the defile, near Tchokodar, or Thajwas, I caught sight of two dark masses which I could not at first distinguish in the semi-obscurity, but which, on closer inspection, proved to be two bears following a cub on the roadway. Being alone with my servant—the caravan having remained behind—I hesitated somewhat in attacking them with my single rifle, but long excursions on the mountains had strongly developed the instincts of the hunter in me, and I resolved to brave the dangers. To leap from the saddle, fire, and reload, without even verifying the result of the first shot, was the work of a second. One of the bears sprang toward me, but a second shot changed his course, and he disappeared. Still holding my loaded rifle, I cautiously advanced in the direction in which I had fired and found a bear lying on its side, with a young cub playing near. Another shot brought him down in his turn, and I thus procured two beautiful skins of jet black.

This meeting delayed us two full hours, and night had completely fallen when I pitched my tent near Tehokodar, which I again left at the first streak of dawn for Baltal, still following the course of the Sindh.

The magnificent scenery of the "golden prairie" comes to an abrupt end here with a village of the same name—sona (gold) and marg (prairie). The slope of Zodgi-la is then immediately reached—a steep elevation of eleven thousand five hundred feet—beyond which the entire country assumes a severe, inhospitable character. My hunting adventures were now at an end, having seen nothing this side of Baltal but wild goats. Game might have been found in plenty by penetrating into the very heart of these mysterious mountains, but I had neither the time nor desire to leave the highway on such dangerous expeditions, and I tranquilly continued my journey toward Ladak.

What an abrupt transition I experienced, in passing from the smiling nature and fine population of Kashmir to the barren gloomy rocks and deformed beardless inhabitants of the Ladak!

The country into which I had just penetrated stands at an altitude of eleven to twelve thousand feet, descending to a level of eight thousand at Kargil.

The ascent of Zodgi-La is extremely difficult, being an almost perpendicular wall, while, at some points, the road winds over projecting rocks not more than a meter in breadth, bordering on a precipice of unfathomable depth. Heaven preserve the traveler from a fall! In some places long poles have been introduced into the rocks and covered with earth. Brr—! At the thought that the dislodging of the smallest stone from the mountain-side, or the oscillation of the poles might precipitate the structure into the yawning abyss below, carrying with it the intrepid person who might have ventured on this perilous path, my heart almost stopped its beating, and it was with a sigh of relief that I finally came to the end of the dangerous path.

Having crossed the glaciers, we made a halt in the valley and began preparations to spend the night near a post-hut, amid cheerless surroundings of eternal ice and snow.

Beyond Baltal distance is determined by means of daks — postal stations established to facilitate the forwarding of mail. These are low huts situated at a distance of seven kilometers from each other, where a man remains permanently on duty in each. The postal service between the Kashmir and Thibet is of the most primitive kind. The letters are inclosed in a leather bag and

placed in charge of a carrier, who rapidly travels over the seven kilometers allotted to him with a basket strapped to his back containing a number of these bags. This he hands over to another carrier, who, in his turn, accomplishes his task in a similar fashion. Neither rain nor snow can stop them, and the service is thus carried on with regularity between Kashmir and Thibet, and vice-versa, once a week. Each run is paid for at the rate of six annas (one franc), this being the compensation usually given merchandise carriers, although my servants carried a burden ten times as heavy. One is filled with compassion at sight of the pale, haggard faces of these weary men; but what can be done? It is the custom of the country, and strangers are powerless. Tea is brought from China in a similar way, a rapid and cheap means of transportation.

As we approached Montaiyan, I rejoined the caravan of Yarkandians which I had promised to accompany on their journey. They recognized me from afar and begged me to examine one of their companions who was very ill. I found him struggling in the throes of a burning fever, and waved my hands as a sign of despair; pointing to heaven to make them understand that human science and will was powerless now, and that God alone could save him. As they were journeying

very slowly, I left them once more with the intention of reaching Dras that evening, a town built in the depth of the valley on a river of the same name, near which is a small fort of extremely ancient construction, newly plastered, and guarded by three soldiers of the Maharaja's army.

Here I took shelter in the postal building; the only station in connection with the telegraphic wire laid from Serinagur to the heart of the Himalayas. From this time forward, I totally abandoned my tent at night and sought repose in the roadside inns, which, though repulsively filthy, could always boast of a huge chimney fire.

From Dras to Kargil the scenery is monotonous and disagreeable. The sunrise and sunset are glorious it is true, and the moonlight is magnificent, but the road is flat, endless, and beset with dangers.

Kargil is the chief town of the district and the residence of the governor of the division. The site is decidedly picturesque. Two turbulent streams, the Sourou and Wakka, dash noisily over their rocky beds and unite their rippling waters as they emerge from their respective gorges thus forming the Suru River, on the banks of which the mud buildings of Kargil are

constructed. A small fort, guarded by two or three soldiers, stands at the junction of the two streams.

Having procured fresh horses, I resumed my journey at sunrise by entering the Ladak, or Little Thibet. During this day's journey I crossed a shaky bridge, which, like all bridges in Kashmir, was rudely constructed of long beams resting on either banks, overlaid with fagots and slender poles, giving it the appearance of a somewhat primitive suspension bridge. Before long I reached a small plateau over which the road stretched for two kilometers, then gradually descended into the narrow valley of the Wakka, with its many tiny villages, the most picturesque of which is Paskium on the left bank of the river.

I was now treading Buddhist soil. The inhabitants of this part of the country are of the most simple and gentle character, seeming utterly in ignorance of what we term "quarreling" at home. Women are somewhat scarce; but the few we chanced to meet, by the expression of cheerfulness and prosperity reflected upon their countenances, presented a strong contrast to those I had so far seen in Kashmir or India. But this is not astonishing, since each of these women legitimately possesses from three to five husbands.

Polyandry is practiced throughout the country. However large a family may be, there is but one woman in the household; and if it does not consist of more than three persons, a bachelor may become a member of it by bringing material compensation into the house. The days allotted to each of the husbands are determined upon beforehand, and all perform their duties with scrupulous exactitude. The men, as a rule, are of weakly constitutions, with stooped shoulders and a general debilitated appearance, and scarcely ever pass middle age. In fact, I did not meet one single white-haired old man throughout my journey in the Ladak country.

That portion of the Kargil route which lies in the center of the Ladak, is of a more cheerful aspect than the country over which I had just traveled, being much enlivened by a number of small hamlets, but trees and verdure are unfortunately exceedingly scarce.

Twenty miles from Kargil, at the mouth of the defile formed by the swift current of the Wakka, is a small village called Chargol, in the center of which are three altars decked in bright colors (t'hortènes is the name they bear in Thibet). Below, near the river, is a mass of rocks forming long, thick walls, on which flat stones of divers colors have been thrown pell-mell, in the greatest

disorder. These stones are elaborately engraved with all sorts of prayers in Sanscrit, Thibetan, and Oudhist characters; and even Arabic inscriptions have sometimes been found in this mixture. Unperceived by my carriers, I surreptitiously abstracted a few of these stones which I subsequently placed in the palace of the Trocadero.

From Chargol on, these peculiar oblong piers are seen at every step. At the first streak of dawn I started on my way with fresh horses, coming to a halt near the convent (gonpa) of Moulbeck, which stands against a tall isolated rock overlooking the hamlet of Wakkha. Not far away towers another gigantic rock of peculiar form, which looks as if transported there by human hands, and bears on one side a carved image of Buddha several meters in height.

On this rock were placed a number of weather-cocks that served as a means of invocation. These labor-saving devices consist of wooden hoops draped with white or yellow material, and attached to a stick set vertically into the ground. The softest breeze will set them in motion, and the happy individual who possesses one of these contrivances is no longer obliged to recite his prayers, as everything that may be asked of the presiding god, by the believer, is written thereon.

Seen from a distance this white-plastered mon-

astery, standing in such strong relief against the gray rocks, and these whirling machines with their floating draperies, produce a very strange effect in that half-dead country.

Leaving my horses in the hamlet, and followed by my servant, I turned my steps in the direction of the convent, which was reached by a narrow stairway hewn into the solid rock. At the top of this steep flight, I was greeted by a corpulent Lama, with a fringe of scraggy beard beneath his chin—a characteristic of the Thibetan people—and exceedingly ugly features, but who received me with the utmost cordiality. His dress consisted of a yellow robe and a cloth cap of the same color with ear-laps. In his right hand he carried a brass prayer-wheel, which he set in motion from time to time without the least pause in the conversation. This constituted a perpetual prayer, which being communicated to the air was the more easily wafted to heaven by the aid of the elements. After crossing a long succession of low rooms, in which were shelved a variety of images of Buddha, all sorts and sizes buried beneath a thick mantle of dust, we finally emerged upon an open terrace, from which the eye rested on a most barren waste, interspersed with ledges of gray rocks, and traversed by a single road lost

in both directions beyond the limits of the horizon.

We were scarcely seated when an attendant appeared with hop-beer, or tchang, as it is called in this region, prepared within the walls of the monastery. This beverage gives the monks a quantity of superfluous flesh, which is considered by the people as a sign of particular favor from heaven.

The Thibetan language is generally spoken here. The origin of this tongue is enveloped in obscurity; the accepted theory, however, is that a king of Thibet, who reigned in the days of Mohammed, undertook the creation of a universal language to be used by all the followers of Buddha. With this end in view he simplified the Sanscrit grammar, composed an alphabet containing an infinite number of signs, and thus formed the basis of a tongue of exceedingly easy pronunciation, but of most complicated orthography; no less than eight characters being required to represent a single sound. The modern literature of Thibet is all written in this language. The Thibetan tongue in its purity, moreover, is spoken in the Ladak and in Oriental Thibet only; a dialect formed from a mixture of the mother tongue and a variety of idioms borrowed from the people of adjacent regions being used in all other parts of the country.

There always exist two tongues, even in everyday life, among the Thibetans; one being utterly incomprehensible to the women, while the other is spoken by the entire nation. The Thibetan tongue, in all its purity and integrity, can be found in the monasteries only.

The monks much prefer European visitors to Mohammedans; and when I asked the reason of this preference, the Lama replied:

"The Mohammedans have nothing in common with our religion. In their recent victorious campaign, they converted, by force, a number of Buddhists to Islamism; and it will require great efforts on our part to bring back these descendants of Buddhists into the path of the true God. As to Europeans, it is an entirely different matter. Not only do they profess the essential principles of monotheism, but they also form part of the rank of worshipers of Buddha in almost the same degree as the Thibetan Lamas themselves. The only error of the Christians is that after adopting the great doctrine of Buddha, they, at the very outset, completely separated themselves from him and created another Dalaï-Lama; while ours alone has received the divine favor of seeing the majesty of Buddha face to face, and the power of serving as intermediary between heaven and earth."

"Who is this Dalai-Lama of the Christians of whom you speak?" I asked. "We have a 'Son of God' to whom we address our fervent prayers. It is to him we have recourse, that he may intercede for us near our one and indivisible God."

"It is not to him I referred, sahib," he replied. "We also respect him whom you recognize as the son of an only God, only we do not regard him as such, but as the excellent being, the chosen one from among all. Buddha did, indeed, incarnate himself with his intelligence in the sacred person of Issa, who, without the aid of fire and sword, went forth to propagate our great and true religion through the entire world. I speak of your terrestrial Dalai-Lama, to whom you have given the title of Father of the Church. There lies the great sin; may it be remitted to the sheep that have strayed from the fold into the evil path," concluded the Lama fervently, as he once more set his prayer-wheel in motion.

I understood that he alluded to the Pope.

"You have said that a son of Buddha, Issa, the chosen one, propagated your religion throughout the world. Who then is he?" I inquired.

The Lama opened his eyes in profound amazement at this question, and muttered something I could not catch, then murmured almost unintelligibly:

"Issa is a great prophet, one of the first after the twenty-two Buddhas; he is greater than any of the Dalaï-Lamas, for he constitutes a part of the spirituality of the Lord. It is he who has instructed you, who has brought back frivolous souls to God, who has rendered you worthy of the blessings of the Creator, who has endowed each creature with the knowledge of good and evil. His name and his deeds have been recorded in our sacred writings, and, whilst reading of his great existence spent in the midst of erring people, we weep over the horrible sin of the pagans, who assassinated him after putting him to the most cruel tortures."

I was forcibly struck by the Lama's words—the prophet Issa, his tortures and death, our Christian Dalaï-Lama, the recognition of Christianity by the Buddhists, all combined to make me think more and more of the career of Jesus Christ—and I begged my interpreter to omit nothing of the Lama's conversation.

"Where are these sacred writings, and by whom were they compiled?" I asked.

"The principal rolls," said the monk, "written in India and Nepal at different epochs, according to the course of events, are at Lassa and number many thousands. In some of the larger convents, there are copies made by the

Lamas at different periods during their stay at Lassa, and later presented to their convents as souvenirs of their visits to the great master, our Dalaï-Lama."

"Do you not possess any of these copies relating to the prophet Issa?"

"No, we do not possess any. Our convent is of little importance, and the Lamas have collected but a few hundred manuscripts since its foundation. The large cloisters possess thousands of them, but they are sacred things, and you can not see them anywhere."

After a few minutes more conversation, I returned to the camp, reflecting deeply on what had been said by the Lama.

Issa, the prophet of Buddhists! How could that have been? Being of Jewish origin, he dwelt in Palestine and Egypt; and the scripture contains not a word, not the slightest allusion to the part played by Buddhism in the education of Jesus.

I determined to visit every convent in Thibet, hoping to gather more ample information concerning the prophet Issa and perhaps find copies of documents relating to him.

Without being aware of it, we traversed the Namykala Pass at an altitude of thirteen thousand feet, from which we descended into the val-

ley of the Salinoumah River. Turning southward we reached Karbou, leaving numerous villages behind us and on the other bank. Among these was Chagdoom, perched on the summit of a rugged cliff in a singularly picturesque situation. All the houses of this little town being white, and of two to three stories in height, it presents an air of most festive gaiety, which, however, is a common feature of all the villages of the Ladak.

While journeying through Kashmir, the European loses almost all notion of his national architecture in the monotonous sameness of the low square huts of the people; in the Ladak, on the contrary, he is agreeably surprised by the sight of neat houses of two and three stories, with quadruple windows, which remind him strongly of those of European provinces.

Not far from Karbou, standing on two perpendicular rocks of gigantic dimensions, are the ruins of a little town or village destroyed by a disastrous storm and an earthquake; although the remains of the walls show that their solidity certainly left nothing to be desired. The next day I passed another station and crossed the Fotu-La Pass, at an altitude of thirteen thousand five hundred feet, on the summit of which is built a small t'hortène altar. From thence, following

the dry bed of a torrent, I descended into a hamlet called Lamayure, which springs up unexpectedly before the eyes of the traveler. A convent, seemingly glued to the face of the rocky cliff and held there by miraculous intervention, dominates the village. Stairways are unknown in this monastery, ropes being used to ascend and descend from one floor to another; and the only means of communication with the outer world is through an endless labyrinth of passages and corridors. Directly beneath the convent windows, which appear like huge nests suspended from an isolated rock, is a small inn of uninviting aspect which offers little comfort to the traveler. Hardly had I stretched myself upon the carpet in my room when it was invaded by a number of yellow-robed monks, who questioned me closely regarding the object of my journey, the country from which I came, etc., concluding by inviting me to accompany them.

In spite of my fatigue, I accepted the invitation and followed them up the steep passages hewn in the solid rock, encumbered by an infinity of prayer-wheels which I involuntarily set in motion as I passed. These devices are thus placed to save the passer-by any loss of time in prayer; and a stranger might be led to suppose that worldly affairs absorbed their entire day, leaving

no time for prayer. Many pious Buddhists utilize the current of rivers for this purpose; and I have frequently seen long rows of these cylinders, covered with invocations, placed on river banks, so that the steady flow of water might keep them in constant movement, and thus exempt their owners from the obligation of praying.

I finally found myself seated on a bench in a dimly lighted room, whose walls were adorned with the inevitable statues of Buddha, books, and prayer-wheels, with the loquacious monks eagerly explaining the signification of each object.

"And these volumes treat of religion, no doubt?" I ventured, during a pause.

"Yes," was the reply; "they treat of the first and principal rites of every-day life. We also possess several volumes of the words of Buddha, consecrated to the great and indivisible Divine Being, and to all things that have come from his hands."

"Is there anything relating to the prophet Issa among these books?" I asked.

"No, sahib," returned the monk. "We have nothing but a few of the principal treatises relative to the observance of religious rites. As to the biographies of our saints, they are preserved at Lassa, and even some of the larger convents have not yet had time to procure copies of them."

Before coming here I lived many years in a large monastery at the other extremity of the Ladak, where I saw thousands of volumes and rolls of parchment copied at divers periods by the lamas of that place."

In the course of further conversation I learned that the convent in question was situated near Leh. My persistent inquiries, however, unfortunately aroused suspicion in the minds of the lamas, and it was with evident relief, on their part, that I was finally guided back to the inn; when, after a light supper, I soon fell into a sound sleep, leaving instructions to my Hindoo servant to cautiously ascertain — from the young lamas — the name of the convent in which their chief had lived before his appointment to Lamayure.

At daybreak I continued my journey, and, to my disappointment, learned from my servant that his efforts to gain information from the lamas had proved unsuccessful, as they were evidently on their guard.

I shall not pause here to speak of the convent life of these monks, for it is the same in all cloisters of the Ladak. I afterward visited the celebrated monastery of Leh, which I shall describe, in due time, giving full particulars concerning the curious existence led by the monks.

A steep declivity, running through a narrow gloomy defile that leads toward the Indus, begins at Lamayure.

Totally unconscious of the dangers lurking in the descent, I sent my carriers onward and encountered a passably good road stretching between two cliffs of brown argil. Soon, however, the path seemed to enter a narrow, obscure, subterranean passage, winding like a cornice along the rugged mountain side, above a precipice of frightful depth. A horseman, coming from the opposite direction, would assuredly have found it impossible to pass me on this overhanging shelf. Words are inadequate to describe the wild majestic beauty of this gorge, whose ridges tower loftily toward the heavens, lifting their crests proudly above the dark chasm beneath.

At some points the passage became so narrow that I could touch the opposite rocks with the tip of my cane from the saddle, while at times it seemed as if death was inevitable at every step. But it was now too late to alight from my horse, although I had never dreamed that I should soon find occasion to regret my foolish imprudence in entering this gorge alone. This passage, in fact, is nothing more than an enormous crevice formed by a powerful earthquake, which must have forcibly separated two gigantic masses of granite

rocks. In the very depth of the defile is an impetuous torrent, whose loud roar fills the gorge with a mysterious murmur, though it seems but an almost invisible white thread; while above the traveler glimmers a narrow, winding, blue streak, which is the only part of the celestial arch revealed between the towering rocks. This majestic glimpse of nature inspired the most exquisite pleasure and delight, but the severe tranquillity, the frightful hush of the mountains, and the melancholy murmur of the torrent whose waters dashed against the granite rocks, filled me with unconquerable anguish. For a distance of nearly eight miles we were thus swayed between these sweet and painful sensations; then, after an abrupt turn to the right, our troop emerged into a small valley encircled with granite cliffs whose peaks are reflected in the Indus, and on the banks of which is found the small fortress of Khalsi. This celebrated fortress dates back to the time of the Mussulman invasions, and the only route from Kashmir to Thibet passes through it.

Having crossed the Indus on a semi-suspension bridge leading to the door of the fortress, which it is impossible to evade, I traversed the valley and the village of Khalsi, directing my steps toward the hamlet of Snourly, which is situated along the stream and built on terraces bordering

the Indus, intending to spend the night there. The next two days I traveled quietly, and without encountering any difficulties, along the banks of the Indus, through a picturesque country that led me toward Leh, the capital of the Ladak.

Through the small valley of Saspoula, and over a territory of several kilometers surrounding the village of the same name, we saw a number of t'hortènes and shrines, and also two convents, over one of which floated the French flag. I afterward learned that a French engineer had made a present of it to the monks, who used it for decorative purposes.

I spent the night at Saspoula, and did not fail to visit the convent, the reader may rest assured. There, for the tenth time, I saw the eternal and dusty idols of Buddha, banners and flags piled into a corner, ugly masks littered over the floor, books and rolls of paper scattered in disorder, and a numberless quantity of prayer-wheels. The lamas take particular pleasure in making this exhibition, displaying the treasures of their convents with great pomp and pride, without in the least heeding the indifference or lack of interest natural to a stranger. "Everything must be shown, in the hope that the mere sight of these sacred objects may force the traveler to believe in the divine grandeur of the human soul."

As to the prophet Issa, they only repeated what I already knew — that the books which could give me any information concerning him were to be found at Lassa, and that the larger monasteries only possessed a few copies of them. I now abandoned all thought of going through the Karakorum, and determined to find the history of the prophet Issa, which would, perhaps, place the private life of the best of men under a new light and complete the vague accounts given of him in the New Testament.

At a short distance from Leh, and at the opening of the valley bearing the same name, the road stops short near an isolated rock, on the top of which stands a fort flanked with two towers and without garrison, and a small convent called Pitak. A mountain ten thousand five hundred feet in height protects the entrance of Thibet. The road then turns abruptly to the north in the direction of Leh, which is situated at an altitude of eleven thousand five hundred feet, six miles from Pitak, and at the base of immense granitic columns, with pinnacles enshrouded in eternal snows rising to an elevation of eighteen thousand to nineteen thousand feet. The city itself is encircled by a belt of stunted aspen-trees, and is elevated on successive terraces, dominated by an old fort and the palace of the ancient sovereigns.

of the Ladak. At twilight I reached Leh, and descended into a bungalow especially constructed for Europeans who come over the Indian route in the hunting season.

THE LADAK.

THE Ladak formerly made part of Great Thibet. But the frequent invasions of northern nations, who traversed this country in attempting to conquer Kashmir, and the many wars of which it was the scene of action, not only reduced it to misery, but also resulted in its separation from the political domination of Lassa by its passing from the hands of one conqueror to those of another. The Mohammedans, who took possession of Kashmir and the Ladak at an early period, forcibly converted the weak inhabitants of Little Thibet to Islamism. The political existence of the Ladak ended with the annexation of that country to Kashmir by the Sikhs, when the people were permitted to again practice their ancient religion. Two-thirds of the inhabitants took advantage of this freedom to reconstruct their gonpas and resumed their former life; the Baltistans alone remaining Schiit-Mussulmans, a sect to which the conquerors of the country had belonged. Notwithstanding this, however, they have retained but a very vague tinge of Islamism;

the character of which is revealed mostly in their customs and the polygamy they practice. The lamas declare that they do not yet despair of bringing them back to the faith of their ancestors.

In regard to religion the Ladak is dependent on Lassa, the capital of Thibet and the residence of the Dalaï-Lama; it is at Lassa also that the principal Khutuktus, or supreme lamas, and the Chogzots, or managers, are elected. Politically it is under the authority of the Maharaja of Kashmir, who appoints the governor.

The population of the Ladak is essentially Mongolian, but is divided into Ladakians and Tchampas. They lead a sedentary life, build villages along the narrow valleys, dwell in neat two-story houses, and cultivate a few patches of land. They are excessively ill-favored, being of small stature, hollow-cheeked, and round-shouldered, with a small head, narrow receding forehead, the bright dark eyes of the Mongolian race, a flat nose, a large mouth and thin lips, and a short chin, adorned with a sparse beard, in which ends the net of wrinkles that furrow the two hollow cheeks. Such is the Ladakian. To this add a shaven head, from which hangs a very slender braid of hair, and you have not only the general type of the inhabitants of Ladak, but of the entire Thibet.

The women are also of small stature, and possess prominent cheek-bones; but they are of more robust constitution and the roses bloom in their cheeks, while a sympathetic smile continually hovers about their lips. They are gentle in disposition and exceedingly gay, being very fond of laughter.

The severity of the climate and the rugged nature of the country deprive the people of rich clothing of varied colors. Their shirts are of common unbleached linen and of rough cloth of home manufacture; while their trousers, of the same material, are made to reach the knee. Men of means add a choga (coat) to this. A fur cap, with earlaps, is worn in the winter; while a cloth cap with a side flap does duty in the summer. A whole arsenal of small objects hang from their belts; among which may be found a case of needles, a knife, a pen and inkstand, a tobacco pouch, and the inevitable prayer-wheel.

Male Thibetans, as a rule, are so intensely indolent, that when their hair becomes loosened, it remains unbraided for three months; and once they have put on a shirt, it is worn until it falls in tatters from their bodies. Their coats are always dirty, and invariably bear the stamp of their braid of hair, which they never forget to grease carefully every day. They wash their

faces once a year; not of their own free will, but because constrained by the law. The stench they spread around them is, in fact, so intense that strangers approach them only when absolutely necessary.

The women, on the contrary, are exceedingly fond of order and cleanliness; bathing constantly every day, and upon any excuse. A red gown is worn over their dazzling white and well-molded shoulders, confined below the waist within narrow red and green pantaloons, over which falls a wide cloth skirt elaborately plaited. A pair of red shoes, embroidered and lined with fur, completes this house costume. The hair is worn in a thin braid, to which is pinned a large piece of loose cloth somewhat resembling the Italian head-dress; beneath this peculiar veil is suspended a variety of bright colored pebbles, coins, and fragments of carved metals; the ears are covered with two tongues of cloth or fur; and a lined lamb-skin is worn over the shoulders, barely covering the back. While the poor are satisfied with a plain fur skin, for outdoor wear, the women of wealth wear a veritable pelisse, trimmed with red cloth and gold fringe.

Whether merely strolling through the streets or calling on their neighbors, these women invariably carry on their backs a basket of conical

shape, in which they gather their fuel from the dunghills. Every woman possesses money of her own, which she invariably spends on trinkets; usually buying large pieces of turquoise, which are cheap enough, and adding them to the odd ornaments of her head-dress. I have seen stones of this kind that weighed fully five pounds.

The Ladakian woman holds a social position envied by all her Oriental sisters, for she is free and respected; and, save for the few hours of light work she does in the fields, spends nearly all her time in exchanging neighborly visits, although it must be here remarked that "gossiping" is unknown.

Agriculture is the general occupation of the fixed population of the Ladak; but the inhabitants possess so little land—the portion of each being about ten acres—that the income derived therefrom barely suffices for the mere necessities of life, leaving nothing toward the payment of taxes. Trades are generally despised; and laborers and musicians, who compose the lowest degree of society, are known under the contemptuous name of Bem, and universally shunned. The hours of leisure left, after their work in the fields is accomplished, is spent in hunting the Thibet goat, whose fur is greatly valued in India; while the poorer inhabitants, who can not afford the

necessary weapons, hire themselves as coolies. This sport is also engaged in by women, whose powers of endurance are remarkable, and who really bear the hardships encountered in the chase much better than their husbands, the latter being so intensely lazy that they are quite capable of spending the whole night out of doors, lying on a stone, indifferent alike to heat and cold.

Polyandry (a subject which later on I shall return to more in detail) has the effect of uniting the people more closely, by forming large families who till their land in common, with their yaks, zos, and zomos (oxen and cows). No member of a family can at any time leave it; and when one dies, his share reverts to the community.

Wheat is the principal crop, but, owing to the harshness of the climate, the grain is exceedingly small. Barley is also cultivated, and is pulverized before being sold. When the harvest is over, the men repair to the mountains to gather a wild plant called "Enoriota" and a species of tall thistle, or "dama," which are used for fuel, wood being extremely scarce in the Ladak. Forests and gardens are unknown, and it is only at rare intervals that sickly clumps of poplars and willows are found on the banks of the streams. A few aspens may also be sometimes seen near the villages; but for lack of fertile soil gardening can not thrive.

The scarcity of wood is particularly noticeable in the buildings, which are constructed of sun-dried bricks, or of medium-sized stones, cemented together with a sort of mortar composed of argil and chopped straw.

The houses of the sedentary Ladakians consist of two stories, with carefully white-washed walls and brightly-painted windows, the horizontal roofs forming terraces which are decked with wild flowers, and where, during the fine season, the inmates kill time contemplating nature and keeping their prayer-wheels in motion. Each of these dwellings contains several rooms, all furnished with a bed and other articles of furniture, save one, which is reserved for visitors and hung with the most beautiful skins. In the homes of the wealthier class, there is also an apartment specially devoted to prayer and filled with idols.

A most regular existence is led here. Everything is eaten without much choice, but the principal food is of the plainest kind. Breakfast consists of a morsel of rye bread; while at noon a bowl of flour is placed on the table, warm water poured into it, and the whole stirred with small sticks until it attains the consistency of a thick batter, which is then rolled into small balls and eaten with milk; for supper, bread and tea are served. Meat is a superfluous luxury, little

used save by hunters who introduce a certain degree of variety in their meals by eating the flesh of wild goats, eagles, or white pheasants, which are quite plentiful in this country.

A great quantity of tchang, a sort of pale unfermented beer, is drunk all day long.

Should a Ladakian leave home, in search of work in a neighboring village, on a pony—and these privileged beings are few indeed—he invariably provides himself with a small quantity of flour for the journey. The dinner hour having arrived, he seeks a river or spring, mixes a little flour and water together in a wooden cup which he always carries, and sits quietly down to enjoy his meal.

The Tchampas, or nomads, who compose the other portion of the population of the Ladak, are much poorer and coarser than the sedentary Ladakians. They are mostly hunters, and neglect agriculture completely. Although professing the Buddhist religion, they never enter a monastery unless in need of flour, which they obtain in exchange for game; and their favorite dwelling place is a tent on the summit of the mountains, where the cold is excessive. While the Ladakians, properly speaking, are anxious to gain knowledge, proverbially indolent and truthful, the Tchampas, on the contrary, are irritable, extremely active, inveterate liars, and profess

utter contempt for convents. Dwelling among them is the little colony of the Khomba, a bohemian set of people who came from the vicinity of Lassa, and lead a miserable existence as mendicants. Incapable of work, and speaking a tongue not understood in the country in which they beg their bread, they are an object of universal scorn, being tolerated only through compassion for their deplorable condition when starvation drives them in numbers into the villages.

Polyandry, which is practiced in all families, deeply aroused my curiosity. It is by no means a consequence attending the doctrines of Buddhism, for this custom existed long before the appearance of Buddha. It has assumed enormous proportions in India, where it constitutes one of the most active means of checking a population that ever tends to increase; and even at the present day, the practice of killing female children at birth makes terrible ravages in that country; all efforts on the part of the English having proved fruitless in their struggle against the suppression of future mothers. Manou himself made polyandry a law, and Buddhist preachers, who had abjured Brahmanism and advocated the use of opium, imported the custom into the island of Ceylon, Thibet, Mongolia, and Korea. Though long suppressed in China, polyandry, whose

stronghold is in Thibet and Ceylon, also flourishes among the Kalmuks, between Todas in Southern India, and Nairs on the Malabar Coast. Traces of this odd marriage constitution are also found among the Tasmanians, and in North America among the Iroquois.

Furthermore, polyandry has even flourished in Europe, if we are to believe Cæsar, who says in his "De Bello Gallico." liv. V, page 17: "*Uxores habent deni duodenique inter se communes, et maxime fratres cum fratribus et parentes cum liberis.*"

All this proves conclusively that it is impossible to look upon polyandry as a religious custom. In Thibet, it may be explained by motives of an economic order, if we take into consideration the average quantity of tillable land falling to each of its inhabitants. To maintain a population of one million five hundred thousand on a surface of one million two hundred thousand square kilometers, the Buddhists were forced to adopt polyandry, while each family is moreover obliged to furnish one member to a religious order. The first-born son is pledged to a gonpa, which is invariably found on one of the heights near each village. When the child has attained the age of eight years, he is intrusted to a caravan on its way to Lassa, where he enters one of the convents and remains

until the age of fifteen as a novice. There he learns to read and write, and studies the religious rites and the sacred parchments written in the Pali tongue, the language formerly spoken in the Maguada Country, where, according to tradition, Buddha Gautama was born.

The elder brother chooses a wife who becomes the common property of every member of his family. The choice of the bride and the nuptial ceremony are both accomplished in the most primitive way. When a woman and her several husbands decide upon the marriage of one of their sons, the elder brother is sent to pay a visit to a neighbor with a marriageable daughter.

The first and second visits are spent in commonplace conversation, intermingled with frequent libations of tchang; and it is only on the occasion of his third visit that the young man announces his intention of taking upon himself a wife. The young girl, who is not unknown to the prospective groom, since the women of Ladak never veil their faces, is then brought forward.

A young girl can not be married without her consent; but if she accepts the proposal, the young man takes her with him to his home, where she becomes his wife and that of his brothers. A family with but one son, sends him to a woman who has two or three husbands only,

and he offers himself in the role of third or fourth husband. This offer is not usually declined, and the young man immediately takes his place in the bosom of his new family.

Children are sometimes also married at a very tender age; but they always remain in their respective families until they have attained, or even passed, a marriageable age. Should a young girl give birth to a child before marriage, she is not only shielded from public scorn, but is, on the contrary, surrounded with every mark of the greatest respect; for she is prolific, and a host of men rival the favor of her hand. A woman has the right to have an unlimited number of husbands or lovers. In the latter case, she invites the young man of her choice into her home, and quietly announces that she has taken a new lover "jing-tuh;" a piece of information received with perfect equanimity on the part of the discarded husbands, and even with joy when the wife of their bosoms has proved barren in the first three years of her marriage.

Jealousy is unknown. The Thibetan is of too cold a temperament to understand love; which, for him, would almost seem an anachronism, even if it were not a flagrant violation of the custom which makes women common to all; in a word,

to his eyes, love would appear a luxury that nothing could justify.

In the absence of one of the husbands, his place is offered to a bachelor or a widower—although the latter are in great minority, the wife usually surviving her debilitated husbands—or a Buddhist traveler, whose business may retain him for some time in the village, is sometimes chosen instead. A married man who travels, or finds himself in a neighboring town in search of work, always takes advantage of the hospitality of his co-religionists, who place their own wives at his disposal as well as their roofs; and in case a woman has remained sterile, the husbands are really importunate in their offers, hoping thereby to become fathers.

Notwithstanding her peculiar position, the woman is entirely free in the choice of a husband or lover; she enjoys the esteem and respect of all, is always cheerful, takes part in everything that is discussed, and goes unimpeded wherever she pleases, save in the principal chamber of prayers in the monastery, the entrance of which is formally interdicted to her.

The children recognize their mother only, and feel no affection for their fathers for the excellent reason that they possess an infinity of them. Although I do not approve of polyandry, I can

scarcely condemn its practice in Thibet. Were it not for it, the population would increase prodigiously; famines and misery would spread over the whole nation with its entire sinister train: Murder, theft, etc., crimes which are yet absolutely unknown in that entire country.

A FEAST IN A GONPA.

LEH, the capital of the Ladak, is a small town of five thousand inhabitants, with two or three streets bordered with neat white houses, and a market square, or bazaar, where the merchants of India, China, Turkestan, Kashmir, and Thibet come to exchange their products for Thibetan gold, brought by the natives, for the purchase of cloth garments for their monks, as well as for many articles of absolute necessity for themselves.

An old deserted palace stands on one of the hills that rises above the town; while in the very center of the town is a vast two-story building, in which resides the Governor of the Ladak, the Surajbal Vizier—a most intelligent and able ruler, who obtained his degree of philosophy in London.

To celebrate my visit in Leh, the Governor organized a polo game on the square—this game, introduced by the English, having become the national game of the Thibetans—ending the evening with a round of dances and games in

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passed on the right side. Once I tried to turn my horse to the left, but the Ladakians made me turn back, leading my steed by the bridle, and explaining that it was customary to turn to the right. I found it impossible, however, to learn the origin of this custom.

We wended our way on foot toward the gonpa, which is surmounted by an embattled tower visible from afar, and soon found ourselves before a large, brightly-painted door, forming part of a vast building inclosing a graveled court. To the right, in one of the angles, is a large painted door adorned with big brass rings. This is the entrance to the principal temple, which is decorated with paintings of the chief idols and an immense statue of Buddha surrounded by a multitude of sacred statuettes. To the left is a verandah ornamented with a huge prayer-wheel, around which the lamas were gathered in a circle. Below and directly beneath this verandah were a few musicians with long trumpets and drums in their hands.

To the right of the court is a row of doors giving access to the rooms occupied by the monks, all decorated with sacred paintings and prayer-wheels, the latter surmounted by black and red tridents with floating ribbons covered with inscriptions.

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UNKNOWN LIFE OF CHRIST.

port of spoon made of the fragment of
all bound with a piece of ribbon, to
attached a tuft of hair torn—it was
from the scalps of their enemies. Their
around the poles soon developed into a
dance, which was brought to a sudden
re emphasized bang on the drum, only
nce a moment later, the dancers now
ellow sticks decked with ribbons,
held in a menacing attitude in their
t. They then advanced and saluted
na, after which they stationed them-
the door leading to the temple.

ame moment other personages, with
ed in brass masks, emerged from the
pors of the temple. They were clothed
ered robes of different hues and car-
l tambourine in one hand, while with
réy jingled a string of small bells. A
hung against each tambourine, and
t movement of the hand brought it in
h the sonorous vellum, producing a
und. These new dancers marched
e court several times, accompanying
with a soft beating of the tambourines.
round there was a pause, then a terri-
duced by a tremendous beating of the
s in unison, after which all ran toward

foreheads.

The head was Thlogan-Pond
g "born in the lotus flow
ed by another masked per
l and carrying a large yel
ith drawings. His suite
n magnificent costume: De
Kourpo (Brahma), and oth
e lama nearest to us explain
lasses of beings subject
s, demi-gods, men, anima

These personages, advancing
her masked men in silk g
colors, with tessellated g
h six gems and surmount
l each carrying a drum.

amid the din of clashing,
marched thrice around t
n the ground in a circle abo
ngnas, the three-eyed-go
vo fingers in his mouth a

UNKNOWN LIFE OF CHRIST.

a shrill whistle. In response to this band of young men in warrior's dress at of the temple; they wore short shirts, rings of sleigh-bells dangling around their waists tied with ribbons that fluttered in the wind while their heads were concealed beneath green masks, over which floated triangular banners. With a diabolical din of tambourines and bells they began a whirling, dizzying round the gods that were seated on the throne while two tall fellows in clownish tights led a series of grotesque leaps and contortions that threw the spectators into spasms of merriment.

A group, whose disguise consisted of red and yellow pantaloons, came out of the temple with bells and tambourines and took up position opposite the gods, this representing the human power next to divinity.

More red and brown masked figures with faces painted on their breasts appeared on the stage. Two rows of dancers were now formed and a general dance followed, the masked men moving forward and backward, turning in a circle and forming into columns there, only to break long enough now and then to bow to the gods and form into new figures.

The monotonous performance finally came to

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UNKNOWN LIFE OF CHRIST.

ite invitation to accompany him to the terrace and drink the tchang of the offer which I accepted with pleasure, the ace I had just witnessed having made · dizzy.

; crossed the court and ascended a stair-umbered by prayer-wheels, we passed two rooms, in which were numberless f gods, and stepped out on the terrace, seated myself on a bench facing the e lama, whose eyes sparkled with intelli-

lamas immediately brought jugs of which they poured into small brass cups, the chief lama first, then myself and

you enjoy our little celebration?" inquired

as very fine," I answered, "and I have been able to shake off the impression me by the spectacle I have just wit-But, I must admit, that I never imagined oment that Buddhism could surround its ceremonies with so gaudy, not to say as, exterior forms."

re is no religion in which the ceremonies a more theatrical form," returned the "It is a ritual part of the service which

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UNKNOWN LIFE OF CHRIST.

must guess the signification of each themselves. You sometimes also have to this expedient, which in no way principle of monotheism itself."

By my interruption," I broke in, "but of idols which encumbers your gonpas a gross violation of this principle!"

"We already said," explained the lama, and always will be, in his infancy. He feels, sees, and feels the grandeur of it he neither sees nor understands the it which has created and animated all man has always sought tangible things, impossible for him to believe long in opposes his material senses. He has racked to find the means of contemplating the trying to enter into direct relations with the Being who has given him so many and, as he erroneously believes, many very trials too. This explains why he worship those parts of nature from received benefits. We see a striking of this in the ancient Egyptians, who animals, trees, and stones, winds and Other nations, steeped more deeply in seeing that the results of winds were favorable, that rain was not infallible in good crops, and that animals fre-

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UNKNOWN LIFE OF CHRIST.

anner the inherent love of man for all
crete; notwithstanding a series of daz-
ples performed by the great Creator,
same for all nations, the people of
d not help setting up a god cast in
he very moment when their prophet
conversing with the Creator !
ism has undergone the same modifica-
r great reformer, Cakya-Mouni, who
ed by the Supreme Judge, truly under-
ne and indivisible majesty of Brahma,
in his power to prevent the manufac-
ges, made, it was claimed, in his resem-
openly separated himself from the
ic Brahmans and preached the purity
tality of Brahma. The success obtained
f and his disciples among the people
n to be persecuted by the Brahmans,
quired a source of personal revenue in
ew gods, and who, contrary to the law
reated the nation despotically. Our
d preachers, whom we call Buddhas,
ans learned and saintly, because the
ator incarnated himself in them, dwelt
at parts of the world. As their sermons
ly directed against the tyranny of the
and their profitable business in propa-
sidea of God, the Buddhists—that is

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UNKNOWN LIFE OF CHRIST.

ne of Go-Chi—in fact, our religion
d Lamaism (Superior). Red monks
monks are admitted. The former
recognize the authority of the Bantsin,
at Techow-Lumba and is chief of the
istration of Thibet; we yellow lamas
celibacy, and our direct chief is the
This constitutes the difference be-
two religious orders, whose ritual is

all organize such mysteries as I have
ed?"

th few exceptions. These feasts were
ebrated with solemn pomp, but our
e been repeatedly pillaged and our
n since the conquest of the Ladak,
t now be satisfied with white garments
utensils, while in Thibet nothing is
d embroidery and gold vessels."

cent visit to one of your gonpas a
to me of a prophet, or, as you per-
n, a Buddha of the name of Issa. Can
anything of him?" I asked, grasping
orable opportunity of broaching the
was of paramount interest to me.

ne of Issa is greatly respected among
ts," was the reply, "though little is
m save by the chief lamas who have

these records. In co
ablished custom, no pupil o
sa fails to present one or
se to the convent to which
pa, being among the fortun
esses a large number of man
in my leisure hours. Amc
found descriptions of the l
who preached in India and
ael, and who was afterward
s whose descendants adopt
ight, the doctrine in whic
reat Buddha, soul of th
arnation of Brahma; he
always, containing all thi
e origin of man, and his br
rld. He abandoned man
; yet, at certain epochs, he
ion and assumes a human
empt to snatch his creatur
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leaves this ear
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“Three thou
incarnated him:
prince, Cakya-l
gating the doct
Two thousand
soul of the worl
Gautama, build
in Burma, Sian
afterward, than
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of the holy do
trate into China
Ming-Ti, of th
Cakya-Mouni w
Simultaneously
in China, the d
Israelites. An
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UNKNOWN LIFE OF CHRIST.

en. It is our duty to cheerfully assist in the propagation of his doctrine; but I do not know where these papers are to be found. Should I ever again visit our gonpa, however, I will bring them to you with pleasure."

I was interrupted at this juncture by the entrance of two monks, who said a few words—unsatisfactory to me—and hastily retired.

I was summoned to attend the sacrifices. "I will use me," said the lama, with a bow, and then he turned toward the door.

Nothing remained for me to do but to retire to the chamber allotted to my use; where I sought repose after partaking of food and milk, and remained quietly till morning.

Next night I was back at Leh, racking my brains to invent a pretext to again visit the

Days later I dispatched a messenger with a clock, a watch, and a thermometer, to the chief lama, with the information that I was leaving the Ladak, I would probably never return to the convent, in the hope that he would be so good as to let me see the book which had been the subject of our conversation.

My intention was to go to Kashmir, and return sometime later, but fate decided otherwise. While passing along the foot of the

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UNKNOWN LIFE OF CHRIST.

young man kept the prayer-wheel in my bedside, the venerable director of a entertained me with interesting of their belief and the country in general, frequently pulling out the watch and ask, and interrupting his discourse to me in regard to their use and the manding them both. Finally, yielding to solicitations, he brought forth two big cardboard covers, with leaves yellowed use of time, and read the biography of h I carefully copied from the translation-interpret. This curious document is the form of isolated verses, which freear no connection between each other. third day my condition was favorable permit me to continue my journey, and started for India by way of Kashmir. ng days of excruciating suffering were he way; but by means of a letter kindly y Monsieur Peicheau, a Frenchman—ow take the opportunity of thanking for ous hospitality—and with an order from vizier of the Maharaja of Kashmir to rities to furnish me with bearers, I ched Serinagur, which I almost immetagain as I was anxious to arrive in re the first snowfall.

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LIFE OF SAINT ISSA.

TESTIMONY OF THE SONS OF MEN.

I.

Earth has trembled and the heavens
because of the great crime just com-
mitted in the land of Israel.

They have put to torture and executed
Saint Issa, in whom dwelt the spirit of

God who was incarnated in a simple mortal,
that he might be benefited and evil thoughts
might be thereby.

That it might bring back to a life of
peace, and happiness, man degraded by
sin, and to him the only and indivisible
mercy is boundless and infinite.

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UNKNOWN LIFE OF CHRIST.

in their dire distress, the children of remembering their heavenly protector, their prayers to him and implored his aid and mercy.

illustrious Pharaoh then reigned in who had become celebrated for his numerous victories, the great riches he had amassed, vast palaces which his slaves had erected with their own hands.

Pharaoh had two sons, the younger of whom was called Mossa; and the learned Israelites taught him divers sciences.

Mossa was beloved throughout the land for his goodness and the compassion he showed for them that suffered.

Notwithstanding the intolerable sufferings they endured, the Israelites refused to turn from their God to worship those created by the hands of man and which were the gods of the Egyptians.

Mossa believed in their indivisible God,

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UNKNOWN LIFE OF CHRIST.

a great distance from the capital and
ther city, where he should remain with

ssa announced to the Hebrew slaves that
livered them in the name of their God,
of Israel; and he went with them out of
and of the land of Egypt.

therefore led them into the land they
through their many sins; he gave them
l enjoined them to always pray to the
Creator whose goodness is infinite.

the death of the prince Mossa, the Is-
rigorously observed his laws, and God
used them for the wrongs they had suf-
Egypt.

eir kingdom became the most powerful
e world, their kings gained renown for
asures, and a long period of peace pre-
among the children of Israel.

III.

fame of the riches of Israel spread over

all the world, and the neighboring nations envied them.

2. But the victorious arms of the Hebrews were directed by the Most High himself, and the pagans dared not attack them.

3. Unhappily as man does not always obey even his own will, the fidelity of the Israelites to their God was not of long duration.

4. They began by forgetting all the favors he had showered upon them, invoked his name on rare occasions only, and begged protection of magicians and wizards;

5. The kings and rulers substituted their own laws for those that Mossa had prepared; the temple of God and the practice of religion were abandoned, the nation gave itself up to pleasures and lost its original purity.

6. Many centuries had elapsed since their departure from Egypt, when God again resolved to punish them.

7. Strangers began to invade the land of Israel,

devastating the fields
and taking the inhabit

8. A throng of paga
from the country of R
Hebrews, and the con
erned them by authori

9. The temples w
were forced to aband
invisible God and to
idols.

10. Warriors were
women were ravished
lower classes, reduced
thousands beyond the s

11. As to the child
sword; soon, through
nothing was heard but v

12. In this dire distre
their powerful God; t
and besought him to f
in his inexhaustible
prayers.

to incarnate himself in a hu

nd the Eternal Spirit, whi
f complete inertness and s
wakened and detached its
Being for an indefinite peri

order to indicate, in assumi
e means of identifying ours
and of attaining eternal fel

d to teach us, by his exam
h a state of moral purity
from its gross envelope,
e perfection necessary to en
Heaven which is immutabl
appiness reigns.

n after, a wonderful child
rael; God himself,

6. The people, believing in his piety, which was a witness to his goodness, thank him and are pleased to

7. To retrace the path of this family and to lead him forth to and to heal

8. The name of Jesus, years to spend exhorting the path of righteousness of themselves of the

9. People marvel at the infant lips saying that of a child.

10. When the teen, when

which his parents dwelt and
od in modest labor, became
r the rich and noble, who
a son-in-law the young Issa,
or his edifying discourses in
ighty.

at Issa clandestinely left his
t out of Jerusalem, and, in
merchants, traveled toward

perfect himself in the divine
laws of the great Buddhas.

V.

f his fourteenth year, young
journeyed beyond the Sindh
the Aryas in the beloved

his name spread along the
hen he passed through the
ivers and the Radjipoutan,
e god Djaïne begged him to

3. But he left the misguided admire Djaïne and visited Juggernaut, in the province of Orsis, where the remains of Viassa-Krist, and where he received a joyous welcome from the white priests of Brahma.

4. They taught him to read and under the Vedas, to heal by prayer, to teach explain the Holy Scripture, to cast out spirits from the body of man and give back human semblance.

5. He spent six years in Juggernaut, griha, Benares, and the other holy cities loved him, for Issa lived in peace with Vaisyas and the Soudras, to whom he taught Holy Scripture.

6. But the Brahmans and the Kshatriyas declared that the Great Para-Brahma forbade them to approach those whom he had cast out from his entrails and from his feet:

7. That the Vaisyas were authorized to listen only to the reading of the Vedas, and that not save on feast days.

not only forbidden
e Vedas, but to gaze
ondition was to per-
es to the Brahmins,
he Vaisyas.

e them from servi-
'Leave them, there-
gods who will show
disobey them."

ed them; and going
ainst the Brahmins

the men who robbed
ghts as men, saying:
o difference between
lly dear to him."

origin of the Vedas
g to his followers
to men to guide

own the knee before

Him only, and to Him only must thy offerings be made."

14. Issa denied the Trimourti and the incarnation of Para-Brahma in Vishnou, Siva, and other gods, saying:

15. "The Eternal Judge, the Eternal Spirit, composes the one and indivisible soul of the universe, which alone creates, contains, and animates the whole."

16. "He alone has willed and created, he alone has existed from eternity and will exist without end; he has no equal neither in the heavens nor on this earth."

17. "The Great Creator shares his power with no one, still less with inanimate objects as you have been taught, for he alone possesses supreme power."

18. "He willed it, and the world appeared; by one divine thought, he united the waters and separated them from the dry portion of the globe. He is the cause of the mysterious life of

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24. "For on the day of the Last Judgment, the Soudras and the Vaisyas shall be forgiven because of their ignorance, while God shall visit his wrath on them that have arrogated his rights."

25. The Vaisyas and the Soudras were struck with admiration, and demanded of Issa how they should pray to secure their happiness.

26. "Do not worship idols, for they do not hear you; do not listen to the Vedas, where the truth is perverted; do not believe yourself first in all things, and do not humiliate your neighbor."

27. "Help the poor, assist the weak, harm no one, do not covet what you have not and what you see in the possession of others."

VI.

1. The white priests and the warriors becoming cognizant of the discourse addressed by Issa to the Soudras, resolved upon his death and sent their servants for this purpose in search of the young prophet.

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7. In traversing the pagan territories, the divine Issa taught the people that the adoration of visible gods was contrary to the laws of nature.

8. "For man," said he, "has not been favored with the sight of the image of God nor the ability to construct a host of divinities resembling the eternal."

9. "Furthermore, it is incompatible with the human conscience to think less of the grandeur of divine purity than of animals; or of works made by the hand of man from stone or metal."

10. "The Eternal Legislator is one; there is no god but him; he has shared the world with none, neither has he confided his intentions to anyone."

11. "Just as a father may deal toward his children, so shall God judge men after death according to his merciful laws; never will he humiliate his child by causing his soul to emanate, as in a purgatory, into the body of an animal."

12. "The heavenly law," said the Creator through the lips of Issa, "is averse to the sacri-

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UNKNOWN LIFE OF CHRIST.

tries through which he traveled, and
ants abandoned their idols.

g which, the priests demanded from
glorified the name of the true God,
the accusations he brought against
demonstration of the worthlessness of
e presence of the people.

Issa replied to them: "If your idols
nimals are mighty, and really possess
ural power, let them annihilate me on

form a miracle," retorted the priests,
hy God confound our own, if they are
to him."

ssa then said: "The miracles of our
when the universe was created; they
day, each instant; whosoever does not
deprived of one of the most beautiful
e."

l it is not against pieces of inanimate
al, or wood, that the wrath of God
ree vent, but it shall fall upon man,



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ing your labor; it sets that
hours of rest I have myself

11. "It is to Me, and to
all you possess, all that is
above or beneath you."

12. "But," interjected t
a nation live according to
it possessed no preceptors?

13. Then Issa replied :
had no priests, they were g
nature and retained their c

14. "Their souls were
municate with the Father,
the intermediary of no idol
as you practice here."

15. "You claim that we
the genius of Good and th
doctrine is an abomination,
acts not spontaneously, b
Invisible Creator who has g

16. "And who has wille

riests, "how could
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God, and to com-
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ust worship the sun,
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THE LIFE OF SAINT ISSA.

22. "Your doctrine is therefore the fruit of your errors, for, in desiring to approach the Kingdom of Truth, you have created false gods."

23. After listening to him, the wise men were resolved to do him no harm. In the night, when the city was wrapped in slumber, they conducted him outside the walls and left him on the highway, hoping that he might soon become the prey of wild beasts.

24. But, being protected by the Lord our God, Saint Issa continued his way unmolested.

IX.

1. Issa, whom the Creator had chosen to reveal the true God to the people that were plunged in depravities, was twenty-nine years of age when he arrived in the land of Israel.

2. Since the departure of Issa, the pagans heaped still more atrocious sufferings on Israelites, and the latter were a prey to deepest gloom.

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9. "Raise them that have fallen, feed them that are hungry, and help them that are sick, that you may all be pure and just on the day of the last judgment that I am preparing for you."

10. The Israelites flocked to hear the words of Issa, asking him where they should thank the Heavenly Father, since their enemies had razed their temples and laid violent hands on their sacred vessels.

11. Issa replied to them that God did not speak of temples built by the hands of men, but that he meant thereby the human heart, which is the true temple of God.

12. "Enter into your temple, into your own heart, illuminate it with good thoughts, patience, and the unflinching confidence you should place your Father."

13. "And your sacred vessels are your hands and your eyes; look and do what is agreeable to God, for, in doing good to your neighbor, you form a rite that embellishes the temple in which dwells the One who has given you life."

14. "For God ha
innocent, pure of so
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evil projects, but to
justice."

15. "Do not the
say to you, for the
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16. "If you wish
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17. "For such de
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1. Saint Issa went
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Israelites, who were :
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s of the cities feared him, and the Governor, who resided in a man named Issa had come into his sermons excited the people, that the crowd listened to and neglected their duties to the at soon they would be rid of ers.

the Governor of Jerusalem, each Issa be arrested, brought ducted before the judges; not tisfaction of the people, how-manded the priests and the en of Hebrew origin, to judge

ssa, still continuing to preach, m; having heard of his coming s, who already knew him by o meet him.

him respectfully and threw their temple that they might hat he had said in the other

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15. And the learned men then said: "Who art thou, and from what country hast thou come into our own? We had never heard of thee, and do not even know thy name."

16. "I am an Israelite," responded Issa, "and, on the very day of my birth, I saw the walls of Jerusalem, and I heard the weeping of my brothers reduced to slavery, and the moans of my sisters carried away by pagans into captivity."

17. "And my soul was painfully grieved when I saw that my brothers had forgotten the true God; while yet a child, I left my father's house to go among other nations."

18. "But hearing that my brothers were enduring still greater tortures, I returned to the land in which my parents dwelt, that I might recall to my brothers the faith of their ancestors, which teaches us patience in this world that we may obtain perfect and sublime happiness on High."

19. And the learned old men asked him this question: "It is claimed that you deny the laws of Mossa and teach the people to desert the temple of God?"

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UNKNOWN LIFE OF CHRIST.

"But the rulers of the towns have sent thee reports, for he is a just man who teaches people the word of God. After interrogating we dismissed him that he might go in."

The Governor overcome with passion sent his servants to Issa, that they might watch his actions and report to the authorities every thing he addressed to the people.

Nevertheless Issa continued to visit the bordering towns and preach the true ways of the Creator, exhorting the Hebrews to patience and promising them a speedy deliverance.

And during all this time, a multitude followed him wherever he went, many never leaving him, acting as servants.

And Issa said to them: "Do not believe in miracles performed by the hands of man, for God who dominates nature is alone capable of supernatural things, while man is powerless to soften the violence of the wind and bestow

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learned elders begged the Governor to liberate Issa on the occasion of an approaching great feast.

8. But the Governor met them with a decided refusal. They then begged him to bring Issa before the tribunal of the Ancients, that he might be condemned or acquitted before the feast, to which Pilate consented.

9. On the morrow the Governor called together the chief rulers, priests, elders, and law-givers, with the object of making them pass judgment on Issa.

10. The saint was brought from his prison, and he was seated before the Governor between two thieves that were to be tried with him, to show the people that he was not the only one to be condemned.

11. And Pilate, addressing Issa, said: "O, man! is it true that thou hast incited the people to rebel against the authorities that thou mayest become king of Israel?"

12. "None can become king by his own will," replied Issa, "and they that have said that I



21. The Governor then summoned the witness who, at the instigation of his master, Pilate, had betrayed Issa; and when this man came he addressed Issa thus: "Didst thou not claim to be the king of Israel in saying that the Lord of heaven had sent thee to prepare his people?"

22. And Issa having blessed him, said: "Thou shalt be forgiven, for what thou sayest cometh not of thee!" Then turning to the Governor, he continued: "Why lower thy dignity and teach thy inferiors to live in falsehood, since, even without this, thou hast the power to condemn an innocent man?"

23. At these words, the Governor became violently enraged and ordered the death of Issa, while he discharged the two thieves.

24. The judges, having deliberated among themselves, said to Pilate: "We will not take upon our heads the great sin of condemning an innocent man and of acquitting two thieves, a thing contrary to our laws."

25. "Do therefore as thou pleases." Having thus spoken, the priests and wise men went out

and washed their hands in a sacred vessel, saying: "We are innocent of the death of a just man."

XIV.

1. By order of the Governor, the soldiers seized upon Issa and the two thieves whom they conducted to the place of torture, where they nailed them to the crosses they had erected.

2. All that day, the bodies of Issa and of the two thieves remained suspended, dripping with blood, under the guard of soldiers; the people stood around about them, while the parents of the crucified men wept and prayed.

3. At sunset, the agony of Issa came to an end. He lost consciousness, and the soul of this just man detached itself from his body to become part of the Divinity.

4. Thus ended the terrestrial existence of the reflection of the Eternal Spirit, under the form of a man who had saved hardened sinners and endured so much suffering.

5. Pilate, however, becoming alarmed at his own actions, gave up the body of the holy man to his relations, who buried him near the place of his execution; the multitude then came to pray over his tomb and filled the air with weeping and wailing.

6. Three days later the Governor sent his soldiers to take up the body of Issa and bury it elsewhere, fearing a general uprising of the people.

7. The following day the sepulcher was found open and empty by the multitude; and the rumor immediately spread that the Supreme Judge had sent his angels to take away the mortal remains of the saint in whom dwelt on earth a part of the Divine Spirit.

8. When this report came to the ears of Pilate he fell into a rage and forbade everyone, under penalty of perpetual slavery, to ever utter the name of Issa and to pray to the Lord for him.

9. But the people continued to weep and praise their master aloud; therefore many were placed in captivity, subjected to torture, and put to death.

10. And the disciples of Saint Issa left the land of Israel and went in all directions among the pagans, telling them that they must abandon their gross errors, think of the salvation of their souls, and of the perfect felicity in store for men in the enlightened and immaterial world where, in repose and in all his purity, dwells the great Creator in perfect majesty.

11. The pagans, their kings and soldiers, listened to these preachers, abandoned their absurd beliefs, deserted their priests and their idols to sing the praises of the all-wise Creator of the universe, the King of kings, whose heart is filled with infinite mercy.

Of this we have ample proof.

The sacred books of the "religion of the wise men," teaches us that the alphabet was invented in China, in 2800 B. C., by Fou-si, who was the first Chinese emperor to embrace that religion. It was he who also arranged the ritual and outward ceremonies. Yaou, the fourth Chinese emperor who adopted the same faith, published moral and civil laws, and, in the year 2228 B. C., prepared a penal code.

On his accession to the throne, Soune, the fifth emperor, proclaimed the "religion of the wise men" as the religion of state; and in 2282, he enacted new penal laws. These laws, modified by the Emperor Woo-Wang, who was the founder of the Chow dynasty in 1122, are now known under the name of the "Changes."

Moreover, the doctrine of Buddha-Fo, whose real name was Cakya-Mouni, was written on parchment. Foism began to spread through China about the year 260 B. C.; in 206, an emperor of the Tsine dynasty, who desired to study Buddhism, sent to India for the Buddhist Silifan; while the Emperor Ming-Ti, of the Han dynasty, one year before Christ, procured the sacred books written by Cakya-Mouni, the founder of Buddhism, who lived about the year 1200 before Christ.

their midst, as well as of the reports received from the merchants who had just visited foreign lands.

It is necessary to remark here that during this period of antiquity, as in our own days, oriental public life was concentrated in the bazaars, where the events of the day and the news from foreign nations were propagated by caravans of merchants, who were usually followed by a number of dervises who readily told all they had seen and heard on their journey, in exchange for food. In fact, this was their sole means of subsistence.

The commerce of India with Egypt, and later with Europe, was carried on through Jerusalem, where, even as early as the reign of Solomon, Hindoo caravans brought precious metals and all that was necessary for the construction of the temple. From Europe, the merchandise came to Jerusalem by sea, and was unloaded in the harbor where Jaffa now stands.

The chronicles in question were written before, during, and after Christ; although no attention was paid to Jesus during his sojourn in India, where he came as a simple pilgrim to study the Brahman and Buddhist laws.

But later, when the events which had aroused Israel were related in India, these chroniclers — after having committed to writing all they had

just heard concerning the prophet Issa, whom an oppressed nation had followed and who had been executed by the order of Pilate—remembered that this same Issa had recently lived among them and studied in their midst, and that he had then returned to his own country. A deep interest was immediately aroused concerning this man who had so rapidly grown in importance in their eyes, and they at once began an investigation into his birth, his past, and every detail of his existence.

The two manuscripts read to me by the lama of the Himis Convent, were compiled from divers copies written in the Thibetan tongue, translated from rolls belonging to the Lassa library and brought from India, Nepal, and Maghada two hundred years after Christ. These were placed in a convent standing on Mount Marbour, near Lassa, where the Dalai-Lama now resides.

These rolls were written in the Pali tongue, which certain lamas study carefully that they may translate the sacred writings from that language into the Thibetan dialect.

The chroniclers were Buddhists belonging to the sect of Buddha Gautama.

The information contained about Christ is oddly mixed, without relation or coherence with other events of that period.

Without preliminary details or explanation, the manuscript begins by announcing that, in the very year of the death of Christ, a few merchants just returned from Judea have brought back the information that a just man named Issa, an Israelite, after having been twice acquitted by his judges — as was the man of God — was finally put to death at the instigation of the Pagan Governor, Pilate, who feared that Jesus would take advantage of his popularity to re-establish the Kingdom of Israel and expel its conquerors from the land.

Then comes the somewhat incoherent tale of Jesus preaching among the Guebers and other pagans, evidently written in the year following the death of Christ, in whom there is a growing interest. In one of these the merchants relate what is known of the origin of Jesus and of his family, while another gives the story of the expulsion of his partisans and the bitter persecutions they endured.

It is not until the end of the second volume is reached, that we find the first categorical affirmation of the chronicler where he declares that Issa is blessed by God and the best of all men; that he is the chosen one of the great Brahma, the man in whom is incarnated the spirit detached from the Supreme Being at a period determined by fate.

Having explained that Issa was the son of poor parents and of Israelite extraction, the chronicler makes a slight digression with the object of telling us who were the children of Israel.

These fragments of the life of Issa, I have disposed of in chronological order, endeavoring to give them a character of unity totally wanting in the original form.

I leave to savants, philosophers, and theologians, the task of searching the cause of contradictions that may be found between the "Unknown Life of Issa," which I make public, and the story told by the Evangelists. But I am inclined to believe that nobody will hesitate to acknowledge that this version, recorded within three or four years after the death of Christ from the testimonies of eye witnesses, is more likely to bear the stamp of truth than the narratives of the Evangelists, who wrote at divers epochs, and so long a time after these events took place, that we can not be astonished if the facts have been altered or distorted.

Before taking up the life of Jesus, I must say a few words concerning the history of Moses, who, according to the usually accepted legend, was an Israelite. This fact is flatly contradicted by Buddhists. We are first told that Moses was a prince of Egypt, son of Pharaoh, and that he was merely instructed by the learned Israelites. By carefully

from the Eternal Being and was incarnated in the new-born child of a pious and noble family.

The Buddhists, no doubt, as well as the Evangelists, wish to indicate thereby that the child belonged to the royal house of David; but the text of the Gospel, according to which the "child was conceived by the Holy Ghost," may be interpreted in two ways, while, according to the doctrine of Buddha, which is more in conformity with the laws of nature, the Spirit incarnated itself in a child that was already born, whom God blessed and chose to accomplish his mission here below.

At this point there is a void in the traditions of the Evangelists, who, whether through ignorance or negligence, tell us nothing of his infancy, his youth, and his education. They begin the history of Jesus by his first sermon, that is when, at the age of thirty, he returned to his own country.

All that is said by the Evangelists in regard to the infancy of Jesus is totally void of precision: "And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon him," says one of the sacred authors, St. Luke, and again: "And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel."

As the Evangelists compiled their works long

Faithful to their traditions of devotion and respect for the race of their kings, the Hebrews, on hearing of this, flocked to see the child and congratulate the happy father. It is evident that Herod did not long remain in ignorance of what had taken place; and he feared that when the child had grown to manhood, he might take advantage of his popularity to regain the throne of his ancestors. He, therefore, sought the child, whom the Israelites endeavored to shield from the anger of the king; the latter then ordered the abominable massacre of children, hoping that Jesus might perish in this vast human hecatomb. But the family of Joseph, having obtained information of the terrible execution contemplated by Herod, fled into Egypt.

Some time later the family returned to its native land. The child had grown during these journeys in which his life had been more than once exposed. Then as now, the Oriental Israelites commenced to instruct their children at the age of five or six years. Forced to remain in concealment, the parents never allowed their son to leave their roof, and the latter no doubt spent his time in studying the sacred writings, so that on his return to Judea, he was far in advance of the boys of his own age, which greatly astonished the learned men. He was then in his thirteenth

Roman possessions at that period, and then because an active trade with India had spread marvelous reports in regard to the majestic character and inconceivable riches of art and science in that wonderful country, where the aspirations of civilized nations still tend in our own age.

Here the Evangelists again lose the thread of the terrestrial life of Jesus. St. Luke says: "He was in the desert till the day of his shewing unto Israel," which conclusively proves that no one knew where the young man had gone, to so suddenly reappear sixteen years later.

Once in India, the country of marvels, Jesus began by frequenting the temples of the Djainites.

There still exists in the peninsula of Hindoostan a sect which bears the name of Jainism; it forms a link, as it were, between Buddhism and Brahmanism, and preaches the destruction of all other beliefs, which they declare to be steeped in error. It dates back to the seventh century before Christ, and its name is derived from the word "djaine" (conquering), which it assumes as a symbol of its triumph over its rivals.

Amazed at the young man's wonderful intellect, the Djainites begged him to remain in their midst; but Jesus left them to settle at Juggernaut, one of the principal cities of the Brahmans, and

particularly censured the injustice of humiliating the laborer, and of not only depriving him of the benefits to come, but also of contesting his right to hear religious readings. And Jesus began to preach to the Soudras, the lowest caste of slaves, saying that God is one, according to their own laws, that all that is, exists through him, that all are equal in his sight, and that the Brahmans had obscured the great principle of monotheism in perverting the words of Brahma himself and insisting to excess on the exterior ceremonies of the religion.

These are the terms, according to the Brahman doctrine, in which God speaks of himself to the angels: "I have been since all eternity and shall be eternally. I am the first cause of all that exists in the East and in the West, in the North and in the South, above and below, in heaven and in hell. I am older than all things. I am the Spirit and the creation of the universe and its creator. I am all-mighty, I am the God of gods, the King of kings; I am Para-Brahma, the great soul of the universe."

After the world had appeared by the mere wish of Para-Brahma, God created men, whom he divided into four classes, according to their color: white (Brahmans), red (Kshatriyas), yellow (Vaisyas), and black (Soudras). Brahma drew

the first from his own mouth, and gave them as their portion the government of the world, the teaching of the laws to men, and the power to heal and judge them. The Brahman alone, therefore, occupy the position of priests, and the preachers, or commentators of the Vedas only, must adopt celibacy.

The second caste, the Kshatriyas, came from the hand of Brahma. These he made warriors, intrusting them with the mission of defending and protecting society. The kings, princely rulers, governors, and troops, belong to this caste, which enjoys relations of the greatest cordiality with the Brahmans, because one can not exist without the other; and the peace of the country depends on the alliance of the sword and the light, of the temple of Brahma, and the royal throne.

The Vaisyas, who compose the third caste, were drawn by Brahma from his own entrails. They are destined to the plowing of the fields and the breeding of animals, to the exercise of all kinds of trades and commerce, that they may support the Brahmans and Kshatriyas. They are authorized to enter the temple and listen to the reading of the Vedas on feast days only, being obliged to remain at their business affairs on all other occasions.

The lowest caste, the blacks or Soudras, came from the feet of Brahma to be the humble servants and slaves of the three first castes. They are forbidden to attend the reading of the Vedas; and to come in contact with them means contamination. They are wretched beings, robbed of all human rights, not daring to even gaze at the members of the superior castes, or defend themselves, and, in case of sickness, deprived of the care of a physician.

Death alone can free them from the consequences of their life of servitude; but to obtain this reward they must, during their entire life, cheerfully and faithfully serve a member of one of the privileged classes. Then only, after having performed these functions with excessive zeal and fidelity in the service of a Brahman or a Kshatriya, can the Soudra entertain the hope that, after death, his soul shall be elevated to a superior caste.

Should a Soudra be found wanting in respect toward a member of the privileged classes, or otherwise merit disgrace, he is expelled from his caste, degraded to the rank of a pariah, and banished from cities and villages; he becomes an object of universal contempt, considered as an abject creature, and permitted to perform only the basest and most menial labor.

The same punishment may, it is true, be inflicted upon a member of any other caste; but by dint of repentance, of fastings and privations, the latter may in time regain their former rank, while the wretched Soudra is forever lost if once expelled from his caste.

It is therefore easy to understand the veneration of the Vaisyas and the Soudras for Jesus, who, notwithstanding the threats of the Brahmins, never abandoned them.

In his sermons, Jesus not only inveighed against the injustice of depriving a man of his right to be considered as such, while a monkey, or a piece of marble and metal was worshiped, but also denounced the main principle of Brahmanism, its system of gods, its doctrine, and its trimourti (trinity), the keystone of this religion.

Para-Brahma is represented with three faces on one single head: This is the trimourti (trinity), composed of Brahma (the creator), Vischnou (the preserver), and Siva (the destroyer).

The origin of the trimourti is as follows:

In the beginning, Para-Brahma created the waters and cast upon them the generating seed, which was transformed into a dazzling egg reflecting the image of Brahma. Millions of centuries later, Brahma divided this egg into two parts, the upper half of which became heaven and the

lower half the earth. This done, Brahma came down upon this earth in the appearance of a child, placed himself on a lotus flower, withdrew within himself and propounded this question: "Who shall watch over the preservation of what I have created?" The answer came from his own mouth as flame: "I," and Brahma gave this word the name of Vischnou, which signifies, "he who preserves." Brahma then divided his being into two halves, one male and the other female, the active world and the passive world, the union of which brought forth Siva, "the destroyer."

The attributes of the trimourti are: Brahma, the creator being; Vischnou, the preserving wisdom; Siva, the destructive wrath of justice. Brahma is the substance from which all things are made; Vischnou, the space in which everything lives; and Siva, time which destroys all things.

Brahma is the face that animates everything; Vischnou, the water that sustains the strength of creatures; Siva, the fire that breaks the links that unite objects. Brahma is the past, Vischnou the present, and Siva the future. Each part of the trimourti, moreover, possesses a wife: That of Brahma is Sarasvati, goddess of wisdom; that of Vischnou is called Lackmi, goddess of virtue;

and Siva is married to Kali, goddess of death, the universal destroyer.

From this last union was born the wise god, Ganega, and Indra, chief of the inferior divinities, the number of which, including all objects of adoration belonging to the Hindoos, comes to three hundred millions.

Vischnou came down upon earth eight times, incarnating himself first in a fish, to save the sacred books from the deluge, then successively in a turtle, a dwarf, a wild boar, a lion, later in Rama—who was a king's son—in Krichna, and finally in Buddha. He will come a ninth time under the form of a cavalier mounted on a white horse, to destroy death and sin.

Jesus denied the existence of all these hierarchal absurdities of gods which obscured the great principle of monotheism.

Seeing that the people were beginning to embrace the doctrines of Jesus, whom they had hoped to gain on their side, and who was now their adversary, the Brahmans resolved to assassinate him; but being warned in time by his devoted servants, he fled and took refuge in the mountains of Nepal.

Buddhism had already taken deep root in this country at that period. This schism was remarkable for its moral principles and ideas on

the nature of the divinity, which brought man and nature, and men among themselves, nearer together.

The founder of the sect, Cakya-Mouni, was born fifteen hundred years before Christ at Kapila, the capital of his father's kingdom, near Nepal in the Himalayas. He belonged to the Gothamide race and to the ancient family of Cakyas. He evinced a strong attachment to religion from childhood, and, notwithstanding his father's objections and disapproval, left the palace in which he lived with all its luxuries. He immediately began to preach against the Brahmans, meanwhile purifying their doctrine. He died at Koucinagara, surrounded by many of his faithful disciples. His body was burned, and his ashes distributed among the cities in which his new doctrine had replaced Brahmanism.

According to the Buddhist doctrine, the Creator always remains in a state of absolute inaction which nothing can disturb, and from which he arouses only at certain epochs determined by fate, in order to create terrestrial Buddhas. To this end, the Spirit is detached from the sovereign Creator and incarnated in a Buddha, in whom it dwells for some time on earth, where it creates buddhissatwas (masters) whose mission it is to preach the divine word and found new

churches of believers, to whom they shall give laws and for whom they will institute a new religious order according to the traditions of Buddhism.

A terrestrial Buddha is, in some sort, a reflection of the sovereign Creator Buddha, to whom he again unites himself after the termination of his existence on earth; so it is with the Buddhisatwas who, as a reward for their works and the privations they have endured here below, receive eternal beatitude and enjoy a repose nothing can disturb.

Jesus spent six years among the Buddhists, where he found the principle of monotheism still in its purity. Having attained the age of twenty-six years he bethought himself of his native country, which labored under a foreign yoke. He therefore resolved to return there. While journeying thither he continued to preach against idolatry, human sacrifices, and religious errors, exhorting the people to acknowledge and adore God, the father of all creatures whom he cherishes equally, the masters as well as the slaves, for they are all his children, to whom he has given his beautiful universe as a common inheritance. The sermons of Jesus often produced a deep impression upon the nations he visited, where he braved many dangers instigated by the

priests, but was as often protected by the idolaters, who, only the day before, had sacrificed their children to the idols.

While crossing Persia, Jesus almost caused an uprising among the followers of the doctrine of Zoroaster. Fearing the vengeance of the people, however, the priests dared not assassinate him, but had recourse to a ruse instead, and drove him from the town during the night, hoping he might be devoured by wild beasts. But Jesus escaped this peril and arrived safe and sound in the land of Israel.

It must be here remarked that the Orientals, in the midst of their picturesque wretchedness and the ocean of depravity in which they have sunk, under the continued influence of their priests and preceptors, possess nevertheless a most pronounced predilection for instruction and readily understand properly applied explanations. More than once, by the aid of some simple words of truth, I have successfully appealed to the conscience of a thief or an unruly servant. These people, moved by a sentiment of innate honesty, which the clergy, to further their own personal ends, endeavor by all possible means to stifle — these people, I repeat, are very quick to learn the principles of honesty, and exhibit the greatest contempt for those who have abused them.

By virtue of a single word of truth, it is possible to make of all India, with its three hundred millions of idols, a vast Christian country; but—this beautiful project would undoubtedly be prejudicial to certain Christians, who, like the aforesaid priests, speculate on the ignorance of the masses to enrich themselves.

Saint Luke says that: "Jesus was about thirty years of age when he began to exercise his ministry." According to the Buddhist chronicler, Jesus would have commenced to preach in his twenty-ninth year. All his sermons, which the Evangelists do not mention and which have been preserved by the Buddhists, are remarkable for their character of divine grandeur. The fame of the new preacher spread rapidly through the country, and Jerusalem impatiently awaited his coming. When he drew near to the holy city, all the inhabitants went forth to meet him and conducted him in triumph to the temple, which is in conformity with the Christian tradition. The chiefs and the learned men who listened, admired his sermons and rejoiced at the beneficent impression produced on the multitude by the words of Jesus. All the remarkable sermons of Jesus are filled with sublime words.

But Pilate, Governor of the country, did not see the matter in the same light. Zealous agents

reported to him that Jesus announced the near approach of a new kingdom, the re-establishment of the throne of Israel, and that he called himself the Son of God, sent to revive the courage of Israel, for he, King of Judea, would soon ascend the throne of his ancestors.

I have no wish to attribute to Jesus the role of revolutionist, but, to me, it seems very probable that he labored with the people with a view of re-establishing the throne that was his by right of inheritance. Divinely inspired, and at the same time fully convinced that his pretensions were legitimate, Jesus therefore preached the spiritual union of the people that a political union might result.

Alarmed at these rumors, Pilate assembled the learned men and the elders of the people, charging them to interdict Jesus from public preaching and condemn him in the temple under the accusation of apostacy. This was the easiest way of ridding himself of a dangerous man whose royal origin was known to Pilate, and whose fame was growing among the people.

It must be remarked on this subject, that far from persecuting Jesus, the Israelites, recognizing in him the descendant of the illustrious dynasty of David, made him the object of their secret hopes, as is proved by the scripture, which relates

that Jesus preached openly in the temple in the presence of the elders, who had the power to prohibit him, not only access to the temple, but even of preaching in public.

At Pilate's order, the Sanhedrim assembled and cited Jesus to appear before its tribunal. At the conclusion of the inquest, the members of the Sanhedrim announced to Pilate that his suspicions were groundless, that Jesus was propagating religious truths, and not political ideas; that he preached the divine word, and that, furthermore, he claimed to have come, not to overthrow, but to re-establish the laws of Moses. The Buddhist chronicle only tends to confirm this sympathy which indubitably existed between Jesus, the young preacher, and the elders of the people of Israel; hence their response: "We do not judge a just man."

Pilate was not reassured, however, and searched another opportunity of summoning Jesus before a regular tribunal; to this end, he sent many spies to watch him, and he was at length apprehended.

According to the Evangelists, it was the Pharisees and the Hebrews who sought to put Jesus to death, while the Buddhist chronicler positively declares that Pilate alone must be held responsible. This version is evidently much more likely than the account given by the Evangelists;

the conquerors of Judea being unable to long tolerate the presence of a man who announced to the people their near deliverance from the foreign yoke. The popularity of Jesus having proved disquieting to Pilate, it was but natural that he should dispatch spies with instructions to watch every word and action of the young preacher. In their character of inciting agents, these spies endeavored, by propounding embarrassing questions to Jesus, to force him to utter some imprudent words that might permit Pilate to proceed against him. Had Jesus' preaching displeased the wise men and Hebrew priests, they would simply have ordered the people not to listen to him or follow him; and have interdicted him entering the temple. The Evangelists, however, relate that Jesus enjoyed great freedom among the Israelites and in the temple, where Pharisees and learned men conversed with him.

That he might succeed in condemning him, Pilate submitted him to inquisition, hoping to drive him to an avowal of high treason.

Seeing that tortures did not bring about the desired result, and that, unlike other innocent persons put to the same suffering and agony, Jesus did not falter and accuse himself, Pilate commanded his servants to proceed to the utmost cruelty, that his death might be brought about by

exhaustion. Jesus, however, finding a source of strength and courage in his own will and in his confidence in his cause, which was that of the nation and of God himself, opposed an unflinching endurance to all the refinements of cruelty received at the hands of his torturers.

Jesus having undergone the secret inquisition, the elders were much displeased thereat; they therefore resolved to intercede in his favor and ask that he be set at liberty before the feast of the Passover.

Foiled in the object of their demand by Pilate, they determined to insist upon having him brought before the tribunal, so certain were they of his acquittal, which seemed fully assured since the entire people ardently desired it.

In the eyes of the priests, Jesus was a saint belonging to the house of David, and his unjust detention, or what was still more grave, his condemnation, would cast a deep gloom upon the solemnity of the great national feast of the Israelites.

On learning of the refusal of their demand, they begged that the trial should take place before the feast. This time Pilate acceded to their wishes, but also ordered that two thieves should be tried at the same time. By this means Pilate strove to belittle, in the eyes of the people, the importance that might be attached to a judg-

ment rendered against an innocent man if he were tried alone, thus leaving the nation under the sad impression of a verdict dictated beforehand; while, on the contrary, the simultaneous condemnation of Jesus and the two thieves would almost efface the injustice committed against one of the accused.

The accusation was based upon the depositions of hired witnesses.

During the trial, Pilate used the words of Jesus, who preached the Kingdom of Heaven, to justify the accusation against him. He counted, it would seem, upon the effect produced by the replies of Jesus, as well as on his own personal authority to influence the members of the tribunal to not examine too minutely the details of the case before them to obtain the desired verdict.

After hearing the perfectly natural reply of the judges, that the words of Jesus only proved a sentiment diametrically opposed to the accusation, and that he could not be condemned thereon, Pilate had recourse to the only means left him, that is, to the deposition of an informer, who, in the Governor's judgment, could not fail to produce a deep impression on the judges. The wretch, who was none other than Judas, then formally accused Jesus of having incited the people to rebellion.

Then followed a scene of the grandest sublimity. While Judas gave utterance to his testimony, Jesus turned to him, and, having blessed him, said: "Thou shalt be forgiven, for what thou sayest cometh not of thee." Then turning to the Governor, he continued: "Why lower thy dignity and teach thy inferiors to live in falsehood, since, even without this, thou hast the power to condemn an innocent man?"

Touching and sublime words! Jesus Christ manifests himself in all his grandeur, first in showing the informer that he has sold his conscience, then in forgiving him; turning next to Pilate, he censured him for having recourse to proceedings so degrading to his dignity to obtain his condemnation.

The accusation brought by Jesus against Pilate, caused the latter to completely forget his position and the prudence he should display; he therefore imperiously demanded the condemnation of Jesus at the hands of the judges, and, as if to assert the unlimited power he enjoyed, the acquittal of the two thieves.

Finding this demand to discharge the two thieves and condemn Jesus, though innocent, too unjust to comply with, the judges refused to commit this double crime against their conscience and their laws; but being too weak to struggle

against a man who had the power to give a final verdict, and seeing him determined to rid himself of a person who rivaled the Roman authorities, they left him to pronounce the judgment he so ardently desired. That they might not be censured by the people, who could not have forgiven so unjust a judgment, they washed their hands as they came out of the tribunal chamber, showing thereby that they were innocent of the death of Jesus, whom the multitude adored.

About ten years ago I read an article on Judas in a German journal, the *Fremdenblatt*, in which the author endeavored to show that the informer had been Jesus' best friend. It would seem that it was through love for his master that Judas betrayed him, in his blind belief in the words of the Savior, who said that his kingdom would come after his crucifixion. But when he beheld him on the cross, after vainly awaiting his immediate resurrection, Judas found himself incapable of bearing his remorse and hanged himself.

It is useless to elaborate on this lucubration, which is certainly original.

But to return to the scriptural narrative and the Buddhist chronicle, it seems quite probable that the hired informer may have been Judas, although the Buddhist version is silent on this point. As to the theory that remorse of con-

science drove the informer to the taking of his own life, I place little credence in it. A man capable of committing an act of such cowardice and of bringing against any one of his fellow-men an accusation so notoriously false, and that, not from a spirit of envy or revenge, but for a mere handful of silver, such a man, I repeat, is psychologically worthless. He is ignorant of all idea of honesty or conscience, and remorse is unknown to him.

It is to be presumed that the Governor took this matter into his own hands, as is sometimes done in our days, when it is imperative to keep from the people a grave and compromising secret which such a man might easily betray without heeding the consequences. Judas was no doubt hanged forthwith to prevent him from ever revealing that the testimony on which Jesus was condemned emanated from the Governor himself.

On the day of the crucifixion, a large body of Roman soldiers was stationed about the cross to prevent the people from rescuing the object of their worship. In this circumstance, Pilate displayed extraordinary firmness and resolution. But though, owing to his precautions, an uprising was averted, he could not prevent the people from weeping over the downfall of their hopes, which died with the last descendant of the house

of David. The entire population went to adore the tomb of Jesus, and though we have no precise details of the first days after the Passion, we may easily imagine the scenes that must have taken place. It is only reasonable to suppose that the prudent lieutenant of the Roman Cæsar, seeing that the tomb of Jesus was becoming a shrine of universal lamentations and the object of national mourning, and fearing that the memory of this just man might excite discontent and perhaps arouse the entire population against their foreign yoke, should have taken all possible means to divert the public mind from the recollection of Jesus. For three days, the soldiers placed on guard at the tomb were the butt of the jeers and maledictions of the people, who, braving the danger, came in throngs to adore the great martyr. Pilate therefore ordered his soldiers to remove the body during the night, when the pilgrimages had ceased, and inter it clandestinely in another place, leaving the first tomb open and unguarded, that the people might see that Jesus had disappeared.

But Pilate failed to accomplish this end; for, on the following day, not finding the body of their master in the sepulcher, the Hebrews, who were very superstitious and believed in miracles, declared him resuscitated.

How this legend came to be generally accepted, we know not. It may have existed for a long time in a latent state and been first spread among the lower classes; or, perhaps, the Hebrew ecclesiastics looked with indulgence upon this innocent belief which gave to the oppressed a shadow of revenge against their oppressors. However this may be, since the day this legend of the resurrection became known to all, no one has had the strength of mind to point out the impossibility of it.

As concerns the resurrection itself, it must be remarked that, according to the Buddhists, the soul of the just man was united to the Eternal Being, while the Evangelists strongly insist upon the ascension of the body. It nevertheless seems to me, that the Evangelists and Apostles were wise in giving a plastic description of the resurrection; for otherwise, that is to say, had the miracle been less material, their sermons would not have been stamped, in the eyes of the people, with that divine authority, that character so manifestly divine which christianity retains to this day, as being the only religion capable of maintaining the people in a state of sublime enthusiasm, of softening their savage instincts, and of bringing them nearer to the great and simple nature which God has confided, it is said, to the feeble dwarf called man.

EXPLANATORY NOTES.

CHAPTER III.

§§ 3, 4, 5, 7.

THE history of all people shows that when a nation has attained the zenith of its riches and military glory, it almost immediately begins to slide more or less rapidly down the hill of decay and of moral decline. The Israelites were the first to undergo this law of the evolution of nations; and the neighboring countries took advantage of this to attack the effeminated and corrupted descendants of Jacob.

§ 8.

The country of Romeles — that is, the land of Romulus, or Rome, as it is called in our days.

§§ 11, 12.

It is evident that the Israelites, notwithstanding their incontestable genius and intelligence, never seemed to think of the morrow. Like all other oriental nations, it was only in their days of misfortune that they remem-

bered their past sins, which they were each time obliged to redeem by centuries of slavery.

CHAPTER IV.

§ 6.

This verse, it is readily seen, refers to Joseph, who was a direct descendant of King David. This somewhat vague assertion bears some analogy to the following scriptural verses:

“Behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife.”—(Gospel according to St. Matthew i, 20.)

“And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the son of David!”—(Gospel according to St. Matthew xxi, 9.)

“To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David.”—(Gospel according to St. Luke i, 27.)

“And the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David.”—(Gospel according to St. Luke i, 32.)

“And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, which was the son of Heli, which was the son of Nathan, which was the son of David.”—(Gospel according to St. Luke iii, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, etc.)

§ 7.

The Old and New Testaments teach us that God promised David that he would regenerate his throne and place one of his descendants upon it.

§§ 8, 9.

"And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon him."

"And it came to pass, that after three days, they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions."

"And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers."

"And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?"

"And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man." (Gospel according to St. Luke ii, 40, 46, 47, 49, 52.)

CHAPTER V.

§ 1.

"Sind," a Sanscrit word, modified by the Persians into Ind; "Arya," ancient name of the inhabitants of India; it first signified "man who ploughs the soil," or

"husbandman;" in remote antiquity it possessed a purely ethnographic signification; but later, this appellation acquired a religious meaning, principally that of "man who believes."

§ 2.

St. Luke says (i, 80): "And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the desert till the day of his shewing unto Israel." The Evangelists say that Jesus remained in the desert; the Buddhists only explain the version of the scripture in indicating where Jesus lived during his absence from Judea: according to them, he crossed the Sind, a word which, properly speaking means "the stream" (the Indus). It is proper here to remark that many Sanscrit words have, in passing into the Persian tongue, undergone the same transformation of "s" into "h"; as for example:

Sapta (in Sanscrit), which signifies seven — hafta (in Persian).

Sam (in Sanscrit), which signifies equal — ham (in Persian).

Mas (in Sanscrit), which signifies mouth — mah (in Persian).

Sur (in Sanscrit), which signifies sun — hur (in Persian).

Das (in Sanscrit), which signifies ten — dah (in Persian).

Loco citato — and they that believed in the god Djaine.

There exists, even in our days, in the Peninsula of Hindoostan, a sect bearing the name of Djainism; it forms, as it were, a link between Buddhism and Brahmanism, and preaches the destruction of all other beliefs which, it is claimed, are impregnated with errors. It dates back to the seventh century before Christ; its name is derived from the word "Djaine" (conqueror), which it assumes as a symbol of triumph over its rivals.

§ 4.

Each of the eighteen Pouranas is divided into five parts, which, besides canonical laws, rites, and commentaries on the creation, the destruction, and resuscitation of the world, also treat of theogony, medicine, and of trades even.

CHAPTER VI.

§ 12.

It was only through the intervention of the English that an end was finally put to human sacrifices, offered principally to Kali, the goddess of death. The goddess Kali is represented standing, with one foot placed on the corpse of a man whose head she holds in one of her innumerable hands, while in another she grasps a bleeding sword. The wide-open mouth and eyes express passion and cruelty.

CHAPTER VIII.

§§ 3, 4.

Zoroaster lived five hundred and fifty years before Jesus Christ. He was founder of the doctrine of the struggle of light against darkness, a doctrine fully expounded in the Zend-Avesta (Word of God), written in the Zend tongue, and which, according to the legend, was given him by an angel in Paradise.

According to Zoroaster, we should worship Mithra (the sun), from which are descended the god of good, Ormuzd, and the god of evil, Ariman. The world is to come to an end when Ormuzd has triumphed over his rival, Ariman, who shall then return to his original source — Mithra.

CHAPTER X.

§ 16.

According to the Evangelists, Jesus was born in Bethlehem, which confirms the Buddhist version; for it is from Bethlehem only, seven kilometers from Jerusalem, that the walls of the latter city can be seen.

CHAPTER XI.

§ 15.

The doctrine of the Redeptor is nearly all contained

in the Gospels. As to the transformation of men into children, this is explained in the conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus.

CHAPTER XII.

§ 1.

“Tell us, therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar, or not?” (Gospel according to St. Matthew xxii, 17).

§ 3.

Then Jesus replied: “Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar’s, and unto God the things that are God’s.”

CHAPTER XIV.

§ 3.

According to the Buddhist belief, the terrestrial Buddhas at their death lose consciousness of their independent existence and become united to the Eternal Spirit.

§§ 10, 11.

Reference is, no doubt, here made to the apostles and their activity among the neighboring nations; an activity which, at that period, could not pass unperceived,

because of the great results obtained by the preaching of new religious principles based on brotherly love, in the midst of people who professed religions founded on the cruelty of their gods.

Without permitting myself to indulge in long dissertations, or too deep analysis of each verse, I thought it only right to accompany my work with a few brief explanatory notes, leaving the reader to do as much for the remainder.

[END.]







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